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# UNIT CAMPAIGN GAINS SUPPORT

Report by Naomi Penrose

**A HEALTH** expert has praised online campaigners battling to halt plans to downgrade Oswestry's maternity unit.

More than 1,300 people have so far backed the Facebook campaign.

The Save Oswestry Maternity Unit Facebook page, set up by mum-of-four Liz Grayston, has attracted the support of parents who have used the facility, based at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital. And over the past few days campaigners have also launched a petition which attracted more than 800 signatures in about 12 hours. If that petition reaches 100,000 signatures, it will be considered for debate in Parliament. The proposed change would mean mothers would be unable to have overnight stays for rest and recuperation, and those in labour out-of-hours would telephone an on-call midwife to open the unit up.

Gill George, chair of Shropshire Defend Our NHS, said the Facebook campaign was a testament to the service the unit provides for mothers and families, with many taking to the Facebook page to share their personal stories as to how the facility helped them during their first days of motherhood.

## Impressive

Ms George said: "This really is an impressive and beautiful campaign from the people of Oswestry, in particular young mums, who are passionate about their maternity unit. Some of the stories that are coming out from this are just heart-wrenching. One that's particularly struck a chord was from one mum who said that a midwife at the unit picked up on that her little boy's breathing went off in the night. That could've been missed if she was on her own. Post-natal care is being completely disregarded, with cuts being put before care."

As well as Oswestry's unit, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust's board has suggested the Ludlow and Bridgnorth units could also become reduced-hours "birthing centres" to save on costs. A contract for next year's service is due to be signed by Friday. "It's fabulous to see communities in not just Oswestry but also Ludlow and Bridgnorth coming together to sing the praises of their midwife-led units and ensure their voices are heard," Ms George said.

Mrs Grayston used the unit three out of the four times after she'd given birth. She said: "The unit provides an incredible service to not just new mums but also mums who have had children before because although they've been through the experience of childbirth, you have to remember every child is different."

Sarah Jamieson, head of midwifery at the hospital trust, said a review of services had followed a shift in choices made by women over where they gave birth. She said: "This means that we would retain the full range of services offered by midwife-led units but we would not remain open overnight, instead operating through an on-call system."

People can sign the online petition by visiting <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/175669>

## African schools project now has charity shop



Lynn and Bill Morris have opened a charity shop in Oswestry for the Kenyan Schools Project. Photo: Jamie Ricketts.

A COUPLE whose holiday in Kenya led to 12 years of fundraising have opened a shop to help children in the country.

Bill and Lynn Morris, who live in Oswestry, created the Kenyan Schools Project to fund the building and equipping of school classrooms.

Their charity has donated everything from paper and pens to desks and even the electricity supply, not only to schools but also to orphanages. The charity project is overseeing the construction of a toilet block at the Kinarini Primary School near Kwale. Here the charity also funds desks for the classroom through its sponsor a desk project. Bill and Lynn's latest venture is a charity shop in Bailey Street in Oswestry.

They admitted they never dreamt they could become so involved in helping children in Africa. They signed up to visit a school during a dream holiday to Kenya in 2004. "We didn't know that this visit would go on to change our lives forever," Bill said.

"The school was called 'The Mkwakwani School' and when we saw what the children had to put up with just to go and learn, we were so shocked. The children were sitting on concrete floors, barefoot and having to share pencils, paper and books. After seeing the school, which, at that time had 1,500 pupils aged between three and 13 years, we then met the headmaster and his deputy and promised we would try and raise some funds for them upon our return to the UK."

"The trip to the school really got to both of us, and we could not stop thinking about the children. We were going to keep our promise."

The couple returned to their then home in Ellesmere and Bill who then ran a mobile disco, put on an event to raise some money for the school.

They made £500 and used it to buy pens, paper and other supplies. They decided to see if they could sponsor some desks and from there things snowballed until in 2004 the Kenyan Schools Project was launched.

"We thought a charity shop would be a great way to raise more, much needed funds," Lynn said. "People have been very generous in both donating items for us to sell and in supporting the shop."

## DEMOCRACY

### Trial will see public ask questions at full council meeting

POWYS residents will be able to ask questions in a full county council meeting in January as part of a ground-breaking trial.

Earlier this year the county council backed a proposal to let members of the public ask a question at a meeting of the full council as a trial with the first opportunity to take place on January 26.

A question can be asked by anyone, other than a member of council, who lives, works or studies in Powys. Anyone under 18 will have to have the consent of a parent or guardian to attend the webcast meeting and questions can only be directed to a cabinet member or chair of committees.

Questions cannot be asked of the chairs of the planning, taxi, licensing and Rights of Way committee and the licensing committee because they are regulatory committees. Council Leader Barry Thomas said: "This is a ground-breaking trial for the county council with members of the public being allowed to ask questions for the first time ever. Residents have been able to speak at planning meetings for some time but that was restricted to specific applications.

"The trial will allow participants to submit one question on any subject that relates to service provided by the county council or on behalf of the county council." Potential questions have to be submitted by 5pm on January 11.

## ECONOMY

### Street re-opening to be discussed

PLANS to re-open a town centre street to traffic will be discussed in the new year.

Shropshire Council Deputy Leader Steve Charmley said members of Oswestry Townscape and Transport Forum will discuss a possible trial of opening up Cross Street.

He said: "I know members of the forum are due to come back in January with some conclusions as to what roads in Oswestry need reviewing, and I think that will be when the Cross Street plan will move forward." He said the pedestrianised area of town had been "struggling" for a number of years.

## INSIDE

### Students show off panto skills



PAGE 17

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# Support builds for firm's retrospective planning bid

Report by Sue Austin

A TOURIST attraction which has been operating without planning permission has won support from local residents.

The British Ironwork Centre in Aston, near Oswestry, has been a massive boost to the economy of Oswestry those who want to see permission granted, have said.

Owners of the centre have applied to Shropshire Council under the company name, Black Country Metal Works Ltd, for retrospective planning permission.

The application is for change of use of land and buildings; erection of extensions to form enterprise centre; formation of visitor parking areas, camping field, nature reserve and children's play area; provision of external display areas and alterations to existing access and internal drives.

Shropshire Council will have to decide whether to grant permission for the centre, which attracts thousands of visitors each week, and allow it to continue to operate.

In the days since the application was lodged letters have been sent to the council pointing out its importance to the area.

Former businessman, Peter Starbuck, said the centre and arts and tourism venue was entirely self funded.

"The centre has won community awards and has been awarded tourism honours and perhaps its most important contribution to the area is as the biggest employer on the east side of Oswestry," he said.

Part of the centre is given over to artisan units with up and coming businesses allow to work from the units rent free.

Florist Hazel Wakefield said that the chance to set up her business without rental costs had made the difference to her moving forward.

"The support has been invaluable and I believe unique in Shropshire," she said.

Another artist and inventor, Peter Morris, said that the British Ironwork Centre had helped him to progress his work.

He said: "It has enabled me to become involved in bigger and bolder projects."

Support has also come from Oswestry Chamber of Commerce and several charities that are helped by events and fundraising at the centre.

Neil Jenkins, chairman of Oswestry Chamber, said the attraction had led to large numbers of people come to Oswestry, he said.

NO smoking and no drinking alcohol are the key to a long life, according to Doris Morris, who has celebrated her 105th birthday.

Doris marked her amazing milestone among her family and friends with a special party held in her honour.

When asked what was the secrets of her long life are, Doris said: "No smoking or

Doris, 105, gives her hints for a long life



Doris Morris with senior care assistant Claire Jones celebrates her 105th birthday

drinking, the support of a loving family, good living and to help one another. The highlight of my life was having my children, Beryl and Gerald."

Doris worked on the family farm in her twenties and then worked as a carer, looking after a lady in her home.

She said: "I would walk or bike to the lady's home from Rhoswiel to Bronygarth,

which was about three miles away. I was very proud of this and enjoyed caring for someone else, which I did for a few years until I had children."

"I would sew and knit all the clothes for her children as times were hard back then," she said. A party was held at The Court Nursing and Residential Home, West Felton near Oswestry, where Doris now lives.

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# Drivers hit with fines over parking

FIVE motorists will have to pay almost £4,000 in fines and court costs over £50 parking ticket infringements.

They were brought to court after being slapped with a ticket in car parks in Oswestry. The vehicles were among six parked illegally where no parking fees had been paid.

All five were prosecuted in their absence by Shropshire Council as part of a crackdown on motorists who fail to pay up or reply to warning letters.

Each of the those brought to court involved faced an offence for failing to identify the driver, to give information relating to the identification of the driver of a motor vehicle.

The infringements happened between April and August this year.

The cases were found proved against Mrs AC Hughes of Llansantaffraid; Ms M Jones of Pen-y-Bont; Mr R Roberts, of Llangedwyn; Mr Ivaylo Tsvetanov of Oswestry and Mr S Hall, of Dudleston Heath.

All could have escaped with a £50 fine had they paid it promptly. But now they face having to pay almost £800 each. For the offence each were ordered to pay £780 each, comprising a fine of £600, £80 compensation, £40 costs and £60 victims' surcharge.

A sixth defendant, a woman from Wrexham, had recently contacted the parking enforcement team and paid the penalty fee.

## Pub's toy appeal is running again

A VILLAGE pub has organised a toy collection for Hope House Children's Hospice.

The Plough Inn at Weston Rhyn, near Oswestry, has a long-held tradition of asking its regulars and people in the community to donate a toy or a children's game or book to its appeal at Christmas.

Toys for all ages, from babies to teenagers, are welcomed. Louise Corfield, from the hospice in Morda, said: "We are very grateful to those at the Plough Inn who every year provide the hospice with some wonderful Christmas presents."

Donations can be dropped off at the pub. Staff at Hope House are busy preparing for Christmas.

Many children and young people enjoy respite care at the hospice at this time of year.

• Panto – See Page 18

Report by Naomi Penrose

AN independent expert should be brought in to come up with a plan on how Oswestry Town Council's multi-million pound Smithfield development windfall is spent, it has been claimed.

Discussions about Oswestry Town Council's £4 million payment has taken place among members of Oswestry and District Civic Society.

The funds come from the deal the council struck for the redevelopment of the Smithfield site off Shrewsbury Road. The deal has brought about a new state-of-the-art livestock market but other plans for a new supermarket and cinema have stalled.

Among the civic society's suggestions is a move to change permission of the Smithfield to mixed use and away from a large supermarket plus ancillary stores.

Other ideas is for a project to cover Cross Street with a tent-type structure to make it more appealing as a shopping area and establishing a light rail link between Gobowen and Oswestry.

Society chairman and businessman Saffron Rainey believes an independent expert is needed to help councillors and stakeholders forge a plan as to how the money should be spent. He said: "A plan needs to be formed but one that creates a pathway to both investment and improvement. I believe this expert should be external to the town completely, perhaps even Shropshire.

"Without this external view, we could be in danger of the money being spent on just how councillors want it spent, we need the expertise to have a plan that will have a long-term effect."

Mr Rainey said he and fellow members believed spending the sum on achieving longer-term economic benefits for the town by improving the town's environment and user experience would generate the best outcome for the town. He said: "Oswestry has some excellent assets and has so much going for it but, unfortunately, is operating on a low capacity, rather than its full potential. That windfall could make a huge difference."

Oswestry Town Clerk David Preston said some of the funds had been spent on the refurbishment of Gatacre Pavilion as a community and sporting resource. Other plans include possible land exchanges and a garden of remembrance.

## Big gathering for birthday celebrations



Celebrating with Rita Evans on her 105th birthday were, from left, Chirk Court housekeeper Julie Roberts, care practitioner Victoria Jacobs, activities co-ordinator Mandi Southern, Wrexham Mayor Cllr John Pritchard, Chirk Court deputy manager Dewi Tudor-Owen and Eurwen Edwards

RITA Evans has celebrated her 105th birthday, surrounded by family members.

Mrs Evans has 10 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren and nine great, great grandchildren – 34 in total.

She celebrated her special birthday at the Chirk Court care home in Chirk, with visits from dignitaries including Councillor John Pritchard, mayor of Wrexham, Dr Sarah Horrocks, chairman of Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and Eurwen Edwards, honorary president of the Pennal Housing Group.

Mrs Evans was adopted by a childless couple at the age of just three months. Born in Swansea, Rita's adoptive mother later gave birth to her sister Eileen and the family moved to Mid Wales.

When asked the secret to her long life, Mrs Evans's daughter Marian Pearce said: "Mum's a great believer in hard work – and carbolic soap!"

She went to work as a parlour maid when she was 14 years old. She left after two years and worked for a dentist looking after his children for three years before going back into domestic service until she got married at the age of 21.

Mrs Evans and her husband Gwyn were married in 1932 and she went to live in the Rhonda Valley with Gwyn's family. They had two children while living in South Wales, Iris and Derek.

The family left Rhonda as the mines closed, moving to Chirk when Mr Evans secured work as a miner at Black Park Pit. They went on to have two other children, Keith and Marian. When Black Park closed, Mr Evans went to work for McAlpines but sadly passed away in 1963.

Mrs Evans moved to Chirk Green in 1964.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Rider is knocked off bike by lights

A MOTORCYCLIST was knocked off his bike by Christmas lights stretched across the road in a village.

The rider fell, hurting his arm, but escaped serious injury because he was travelling at low speed. Police say it happened on Station Road in Weston Rhyn, near Oswestry, at about 5pm on Thursday last week.

Meanwhile, police are appealing for information after a "suspicious vehicle" was spotted around a housing estate. Officers say a small hatchback vehicle, with at least two men in it, were seen in the Hampton Rise area of Oswestry, at about 10pm on December 13.

PCSO Andy Neeves, based at Oswestry Police Station, said: "The vehicle made off at speed without its lights on, and a male was seen running after it."

### Woman injured in attack in pub

A WOMAN needed medical treatment after she was attacked on the dance floor of a pub.

The victim, a woman in her 20s, was standing on the dance floor at the Boars Head in Oswestry between 1am to 1.15am on Sunday. She was approached by another woman, and was assaulted. The victim fell to the floor, where her attacker then assaulted her to the head before leaving the scene.

The victim sustained injuries to her face. The suspect is described as a white woman in her early 20s, of a petite build, approximately 5'6" tall with brown hair. She was described as looking 'natural' and not wearing a lot of make-up, and she was possibly wearing a ring on her right hand.

### Fellowship to hold its annual meeting

THE Oswestry Group of the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship will be holding its annual general meeting on January 3.

This will be held at the Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry, starting at 11am and followed by lunch at noon.

The Fellowship is a local group for government and other pensioners who are welcome to attend the meetings, which are usually held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry, starting at 10.30am after coffee.

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Malcolm Johnson

# Sight scare leads to new help group

A BUSINESSMAN who was terrified to find he had a bleed in his eye and feared he could lose his sight and his livelihood along with it has set up a support group.

When 70-year-old Malcolm Johnson, from Oswestry, who has his own management company, noticed a worrying deterioration in his vision, he rushed to his out-of-hours GP service. But when they couldn't

find anything wrong with his sight, he went to his optician the following week for a second opinion.

"Within 10 minutes my optician identified a bleed in my left eye and booked me an urgent appointment with the eye clinic at my local hospital," he said.

After visiting specialists, Malcolm was told he had Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) in his left

eye. AMD is a progressive disease, which can have a devastating effect on people's lives, leaving them unable to drive, read or see faces.

"My vision started to deteriorate on a daily basis from November 4 last year," he said. "Delays cause vision loss and I was told I would have to wait nine weeks for loading injections to stabilise my left eye on the NHS, so I went for private treat-

ment and got the injections in two weeks. I can still see and I still drive now, it was such a relief."

To show his gratitude to those who helped him, Mr Johnson has set up a Macular Society support group in Oswestry.

People can contact Mr Johnson via 0300 3030 111 or visit [macularsociety.org/local-support-groups](http://macularsociety.org/local-support-groups) for more.

# Appeal set up to offer shares in dragon project

Report by Naomi Penrose

PEOPLE are being offered a stake in a 80ft Welsh dragon that could be built near Oswestry.

A £1 million crowdfunding appeal has been set up to create a large, bronze dragon statue, built just off the A5 at Halton, near Chirk – the old Roman gateway to Wales.

The man behind the ambitious plans Simon Wingett heralded the project as a "unique chance to make history".

The 60-year-old said: "It truly will be a momentous landmark, particularly for those who choose to invest in it. People keep asking me how they can donate but they won't be donating, they will own a share in it. They will have the paperwork to say so and will be part of something huge."

"You can't do this with any other landmark, this is history in the making, that will signal your arrival into Wales."

The sculpture, based on Wales's national emblem, will be raised on its hind legs on a 30ft high slate tower, standing 110ft in the air.

On top of the roaring statue, as part of the project, there will also be an amphitheatre for performances, a 12 acre garden, as well as a Welsh centre of excellence.

In total the proposal will cost £2.5 million. However, if the £1 million crowdfunding goal is met, the remaining sum will be raised through cash from the Welsh Government and a Finance Wales loan.

Mr Wingett also confirmed 10 per cent of the profits will go to fund cancer research across Wales, which has been made all the more poignant as his 16-year-old daughter Bethan is currently battling Hodgkin lymphoma.

"I always said this project would have a legacy, and this doesn't get anymore poignant than that really," he said. To find out more visit [www.thewelshdragon.co.uk](http://www.thewelshdragon.co.uk)

## Mayor hits out at rates

THE mayor of Welshpool says company owners in rural areas are being squeezed to breaking point as they are paying premium business rates but getting little back compared to their urban counterparts.

Councillor Steve Kaye, who has a business called Multi Services Wales Ltd, at Henfaes Lane, said small businesses such as his should pay corporation tax or business rates – but not both.

He said: "The tax situation needs sorting.

"We all know we need to pay it for services but I feel that we are paying more than our fair share in Mid Wales, while seeing the money we pay getting invested by the Welsh Government into Cardiff and Swansea instead of up here.

"Mid Wales is a forgotten land.

"The powers that be don't seem to care until you are facing poverty.

"I pay premium business rates but feel I get nothing back."

## Award joy for estate agency



Martin Kemp and Penny Smith with bjb's James Beardmore and Craig Meredith

STAFFORDSHIRE firm butters john bee has won the silver award in the Estate Agency of the Year Awards for the best medium estate agent in the Midlands.

Hundreds of leading estate agents from across the UK attended the glittering ceremony at the Hilton London Metropole Hotel where the winners of the most highly regarded awards in the estate agency industry were revealed.

The winners were presented with their awards by actor and Spandau Ballet bassist Martin Kemp, with journalist and author Penny Smith acting as compere.

This latest award follows auction estate agency and best estate agency awards at the last two year's events as well as five further awards at this summer's ESTAS, The Oscars for estate agents.

Bjb managing director James Beardmore said: "It's a fantastic achievement to win an award at this event for the third year in succession. When you add this to our success at The ESTAS this summer, it is a real testament to our brilliant teams in our branches.

"I am thrilled that their hard work, dedication and success have received this national recognition."

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# Waste concerns voiced as fly-tipping levels rise

Report by Sally Williams

**REDUCED** bin collections and too much non-recyclable rubbish is contributing to the rise in fly-tipping, the Mayor of Welshpool has said.

Councillor Steve Kaye spoke as figures show that fly-tipping is on the rise in Powys following eight years of decline.

Councillor Kaye blames a profusion of non-recyclable products, together with cuts to Powys County Council's refuse collection service, for the growing Powys-wide problem.

Households now have a collection every three weeks instead of two. Councillor Kaye says many householders don't have big enough bins to accommodate three weeks of crammed family rubbish and fears the problem will get worse if proposed closures to local recycling centres go ahead.

The report comes at a time when Powys is considering the closure of a household waste recycling centre in either Newtown or Welshpool, the only two remaining in Montgomeryshire after Machynlleth's Potters Yard was closed in January 2015.

Councillor Kaye said: "If we are going to get rid of this problem, Powys County Council needs to go to the Welsh Government and tell them to talk to big businesses about them still producing non-recyclable plastics that can only end up in landfill.

"Families have one non-recyclable bin for three weeks' rubbish. However hard they try to recycle, there is still so much non-recyclable packing around food and products that one bin is simply not big enough.

"You have to squash the bin bags down and there is still isn't enough room, so where can people take these overflowing bin bags and what can be done with this waste?"

"If you have people with extra waste they don't know what to do with then fly-tipping will increase."

"We need larger bins if collections are going to continue to be every three weeks and far less non-recyclable packaging."

"Ideally, most packaging now should be biodegradable."

"The transportation alone of rubbish costs a fortune."

It cost taxpayers an average of £61 each time the council had to respond to the 1,019 reports of fly-tipping. Fly-tipping is a criminal activity punishable by fines of up to £50,000 or prison and culprits also face a tax under the Welsh Government's new Landfill Disposals Tax Bill. Across Wales, the number of incidents has almost halved in recent years, but the past year's spike will be a cause for concern. Estimated clearance costs have risen from £1.8m to £2.1m comparing year-on-year figures.

THE last thing the residents of Shropshire and Telford need is a costly council re-organisation, a councillor has claimed.

Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski and North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson have both suggested that the county could save money by having just one unitary authority.

But Shropshire Councillor Duncan Kerr said this would create an even more remote authority. The councillor for Oswestry South said: "Shropshire and Telford are facing financial melt-down as a result of government intransigence to fund the care services our elderly people deserve."

"The 17 per cent rise in council tax needed to fund adult services is there because of the seven year council tax freeze the Conservatives chose to implement."

"The main political parties have abjectly failed both Shropshire and Telford. The way forward is quite obvious, not a costly re-organisation but an insistence that the two organisations get round a table and work together to cut costs by sharing services. In Shropshire's case it would also help to cut the £1 million plus they spend on councillor allowances. I said precisely this when I was elected to Shropshire Council earlier this year, pointing out that since 2012 the Government has urged them to share services. Unfortunately both councils have chosen to put political dogma ahead of public services and the costs of this failure are born by the weakest in our community."

## Valuable bikes stolen in raid



Louis Meade on the competition bike that was stolen in the raid

A MOUNTAIN bike champion has had his prized cycles stolen in a raid on his home.

Thieves stole eight bicycles and one motorbike from a shed at Louis Meade's family home near Meifod.

They included the teenager's training bike and his competition bike, worth thousands of pounds.

Louis, 18, was crowned junior Welsh mountain bike champion last season and is in the top six in the junior section of the sport in the UK.

Competition has taken him across Britain as well as Austria and Switzerland.

Louis said: "Mum went to the shed last Wednesday and discovered the locks were broken.

"The thieves took eight bikes including

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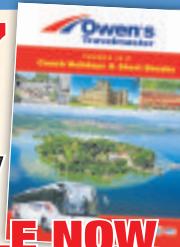
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## BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

Having celebrated winning a seat on Powys County Council to represent the people of Welshpool's Llanerchydol Ward last weekend I now start the challenge to avoid the record of becoming the county's shortest serving councillor – that's because I'll have to do it all again at the May elections.

It's an unusual situation to be in, but it seems the law decrees that a by-election had to be held to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Councillor Ann Holloway if there was more than a six-month gap between her death and an election date. I'm sure my Conservative and Liberal Democrat "friends" will be launching campaigns in a bid to bestow me with that unwanted honour.

Fighting a county council by-election as an Independent candidate against political opponents has proved an interesting, illuminating and costly challenge. Canvassing costs had to come from my own wallet, unlike opponents who seemed to have bottomless pockets in contributing to the nation's paper mountain with endless streams of leaflets – not to mention the telephone calls.

It was pleasing to see that the people of my ward were not influenced though and I will do my best to repay the faith that they have placed in me by representing their needs and views at County Hall – and it seems those needs are currently being ignored.

There seems to be evidence that Powys County Council really has the knives out for Welshpool. First we discover plans to close the town's recycling centre and then plans to close the town's council offices in Severn Road.

The problems caused by the proposed closure of the household waste recycling centre have already been well chronicled but the economic effects of scrapping the historic "County Offices" are yet to become evident.

First there's the expected loss of jobs to consider and secondly the impact on local businesses where council staff spend their cash. History tells us that centralisation of business does have an immediate impact on costs but over time those costs return and more importantly standards of service vanish forever. Welshpool deserves better because council tax will rise again – meaning we will pay more for a lot less. What the people of Welshpool find hard to take is that Powys County Council is doing less for the town but will expect its residents to pay more tax. "How does that work?" was the constant theme when I visited doorsteps and I didn't have an answer. But I'll pretty soon be looking for those answers. I'm relishing the opportunity to ask some probing questions but I'm also well aware that I am only one voice in a very large congregation.



Head lampman Harry Roberts checks the unused miners' lamps after the closure of Ifton in 1968



The last shift at Ifton Colliery in 1968. Harry Richards from Weston Rhyn is fifth from the left



Ifton Colliery was one of Shropshire's last mines to close, shutting down in 1968

## WORKING FOR YOU



As 2016 draws to a close and we begin to look forward to 2017, there is much to be celebrated. This time last year, I wrote that it was possible that we would have an enormous decision to make on our membership of the European Union. In June more people voted to leave the European Union than have ever voted for any other issue or party in our country's history. We can now take back control of our own laws in our own Parliament, our own money and our own borders.

The appalling, deteriorating mobile phone signal is inconvenient at best, life-endangering at worst. I have met Ministers and the Chief Executives of BT and Openreach. I have apparently written more letters to them than any other MP. I have invited the Chief Executive of Openreach, Clive Selley, to North Shropshire early in the New Year to show him just how bad the situation has become, and to work with him on urgent solutions.

I continue to meet with Ministers and operators as the consultations for the West Coast and the Wales and Borders franchises progress. We must have cleaner and more regular trains providing better services.

The Roads Minister visited North Shropshire last May as part of my campaign to dual the A5 and build the Pant/Llanymynech bypass. His successor, John Hayes, is visiting again this spring. My Oswestry Health Group continues to meet every two months to discuss local health issues. I am exasperated by the dithering of the Future Fit process. It has cost the taxpayer over £2 million and has taken far too long. This month the Shropshire CCGs failed to reach a decision on whether to press ahead with Future Fit. I support the Clinical Commissioning Group's proposal, where the current A&Es will continue to provide 80 per cent of their current services. In addition to these a brand new Emergency Care Centre will be built so that the most traumatic cases are treated locally. We must bring this sort of emergency care, along with top class clinical specialists, back into the county. I also support the proposals to build similar Urgent Care Centres in Oswestry and Whitchurch.

In 1938 the number of men had risen to 1,186. The pit closed on November 23, 1968. It had been making big losses. The shutdown put between 400 and 500 men out of work, with up to 200 more joining them when salvage work finished.

until the pit closed. There was a certain amount of comradeship."

He served the maximum 15 years as a volunteer in the rescue brigade and although not involved in any life-saving incidents, he tackled a number of fires.

After finding new work when the pit closed, he retired at the age of 64.

Ifton pit near St Martins was first sunk in 1913 as the "Gertrude Pit" of Brynkinalt Colliery, owned by WY Craig and Son, of Preegwene, Oswestry. Eventually Brynkinalt ceased and the men were transferred to Ifton. In 1914, 930 were employed, of whom 741 were underground. Gas, house and steam coal was produced.

In 1938 the number of men had risen to 1,186. The pit closed on November 23, 1968. It had been making big losses.

The shutdown put between 400 and 500 men out of work, with up to 200 more joining them when salvage work finished.

A statue could be built to mark the half century anniversary of the closure.

The plans are being brought forward by the Ifton Colliery Commemorative Project. Councillor Steve Davenport, who represents St Martins on Shropshire Council, said: "While Ifton Colliery was open, it was the centre of industry in the area.

"It's of utmost importance that the colliery and its workers are commemorated, it's a huge part of the area's history, so I'm glad that the project has been set up and a statue is planned to reach for the 50 years since the colliery closed."

"Sue Schofield, John Stephens and the rest of the project committee are working extremely hard to make this happen, and I think they deserve recognition for that." In the coming months, project committee members will be encouraging people to get in touch – especially those who have been part of its history or have a connection to it through a family member – with a get together and events planned in the new year.



The writing's on the wall... miners look at the closure notice

"Everybody used to say almost every day of their lives they wished it closed tomorrow," he said. "As soon as it closed, they were at a loose end."

"They didn't know what else to do."

## Employment

"Cadbury's started up in Chirk and that provided employment for a lot of people who were younger."

"I had a couple or three jobs before I settled into something."

"I had three years at the orthopaedic hospital as a porter."

"It was a much better job than mining, where everything depended on production."

"My father was a miner, and my brothers," said Mr Richards, of Weston Rhyn.

"That was all there was in Ifton –

farm work or pit work." He started as a boy, aged 14. "Opening doors was my first job."

"The doors controlled the air."

"They had to be opened and closed to allow the tubs, the trucks, to pass through."

"I was also uncoupling tubs and horse driving. There were ponies and stables down there."

"They used to bring the ponies up very occasionally when there was a day or two off."

"He advanced to do other jobs, like engine driving when the ponies went."

"Then you get to the face eventually, shovelling."

"Then I was a deputy for the last 20 odd years."

Did he enjoy the job?

"It was all we ever did, wasn't it? I didn't know much about any other jobs

## CAN I ENSURE MY WILL ISN'T CHALLENGED IF I LEAVE EVERYTHING TO MY NEW WIFE?

**Q:** I am a widower and have met a wonderful lady I would like to marry. I am however worried what may happen if I die before her. Her former husband was a scoundrel and left her with almost nothing, so as my children are grown-up and successful I feel it would be more important to look after her in my Will. I don't think my children would contest it if I made her the main beneficiary but is there any way of ensuring her protection just in case?

**A:** Your plight is one being experienced more commonly these days due to an increase in the divorce rate and the number of people entering into second marriages and relationships that bring with them extended families. Unfortunately it's more Wills are also being challenged by offspring who expect to inherit and then find out they haven't. There are time limits for any claim against the estate to be made.

The key is for you to make sure that your intentions are very clear when you make a new Will. So if you want to exclude someone who might otherwise expect to inherit you could explain in your Will why you have made that decision. This is known as making a statement of wishes. Such a statement is recognised by the courts and can therefore avoid any potential dispute and associated legal action being taken.

An alternative is to create a trust within your will allowing your soon-to-be wife a life interest for the remainder of her lifetime with your children being the ultimate beneficiaries.

Where second families are concerned it is imperative that people take extra care about the drafting of their Will to ensure there can be no question of their intentions. Using a reputable local solicitor to prepare the draft is safest.

This question has been answered by Victoria Wilson, a Partner with GHP Legal. For an appointment visit [www.ghplegal.com](http://www.ghplegal.com) or contact one of our offices: Oswestry 01691 659194, Chirk 01691 777949, Wrexham 01978 291456, Llangollen 01978 860313. For Personal Injury, Employment and Family matters we offer FREE legal diagnostic clinics every Wednesday at our Oswestry office and every Monday at our Wrexham office, 12-3pm (no appointment necessary). GHP Legal is authorised and regulated by the SRA 51566, and Lexcel Accredited.

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# Make parents pay for children's upkeep

SINGLE parents are owed nothing. The only people responsible for their children are their parents. Children should have good parents and food suppliers. Unknown fathers should also be responsible.

Tax and ratepayers have no responsibility for the production of these single parents' children. They have no choice in their considerations or their child production.

When people choose to have sex and produce children then the thoughtless people are responsible to support the children. When they are given these money rewards it only encourages people to have sex and be irresponsible. There are medical ways

to prevent child production. Children are brought up to think that there is no need to work or strive to earn food. They believe that it is right for their welfare to be given to them by hard working taxpayers. If parents have separated then they should look after their children between them. They should not be allowed to have children as an excuse for receiving money from the millions of taxpayers.

Many workless and idle men live with many women today. They have many children. The object is to receive large amounts of tax money. They do not have to work. They produce brainwashed children who

pick up the knowledge that you can live without working. You can smoke, drink alcohol and enjoy man-made entertainment on the taxpayers' money. There are too many humans on this planet and they are increasing in numbers out of control. They steal the land and destroy the other life forms. Our country used to be forests; it is now fields for humans using other life's space. They have the same rights to survive on this rightfully shared planet.

We are manipulating and destroying ourselves and maybe the planet world.

**TOM WILLIAMS**  
Sutton Hill

# It is time to kill off all of these organisations to save money

WE are always being told that the government needs to save money in order to preserve services so I suggest they take up my idea and disband some, if not all, of the stupid, inefficient and expensive agencies that they control.

We have the Ombudsman run mainly by ex-senior executives of local authorities usually after they have taken a large golden handshake to retire early with a pension. Someone let me know when they hear next of any member of the public gaining success where these people are concerned.

The Ombudsman is only interested in procedures and believe me councillors and officers are very good at procedures. Truth and justice have nothing to do with procedures. We also have the Freedom of Information Commission and I am not very impressed with my dealings with them so far.

Finally I come to the Child Support Agency whose record is extremely poor in my opinion.

We hear that up to £6 million is owed by absent fathers to keep their offspring in Shropshire alone.

Some debts going back over 20 years so the chances of recovering that money are now very slim.

The system is changing and single mothers will now have to pay the CSA to recover any contributions they achieve and somehow I don't think that that is going to happen.

Have a guess who will continue to be paying for these children where the mothers are unemployed and without income? I will give you a clue! It won't be the fathers!

Quangos and agencies should be shut down, as promised by Cameron, and there would be a lot more money for genuine need. The three I have mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg. The sums of money involved are astronomical, but getting rid of them would upset the government's budget!

**ADRIAN WILLIAMS**  
Bratton

# Elitism has ruled for far too long

SO we still have some 'Remoaners' that still cannot accept that 17 million voted out of the EU and won, and now trying some sneaky ploy to derail it.

Yes, perhaps Theresa May should not have delayed invoking Article 50, it should have been done on her first day in office.

But these money men in Parliament,

that obviously want us in so they can get even richer, have no sympathy for the poor and low-waged, most who want to leave.

They were voted in to represent the people—not themselves. Well let's name them, and let's get them voted out of their cushy positions, or what's the point of democracy?

What do you think these pompous elected

'Remoaners'

would say if once they got elected,

people that didn't vote for them

could go to court, get a ballot and have a second vote? They'd laugh at you.

Let's not forget Parliament voted 544 to

53 to give the people a vote in the referendum

on whether they want in or out of Europe – Out won, end of.

**G B DIPPER**

Leominster

The most recent examples are judges with not an inch of responsibility to the majority vote and individuals whom think they are above the electorate politicians, Clegg and Blair, to name only two of the elitists whom think they know best, or should I say treat the people as idiots.

So maybe after American the people of Great Britain will stand up and take on this corrupt attitude against the will of the people. As history tells us look after your subjects or the word responsible revolution comes to mind.

**L THOMAS**  
Wellington

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## Road opens – but with no invite for mayor



Oswestry bypass opened 30 years ago, on December 22, 1986, and although Oswestry's Town Mayor, Councillor Colin Bain, was naturally pleased, he was upset that he had not had an invitation to the opening ceremony. The sign behind him says the road was opening in the summer of 1987, but in the event it was completed six months early.

## Politicians do need to remember they are serving public

IT would seem that five minutes after a general election voters become invisible until the next one.

Incoming politicians blame the previous lot for the "crisis" that prevents the incomers from keeping their promises to the general public (so called centre ground) and they set out to please their paymasters – be they global capitalists or trade unionists.

When politics became a career option not a calling, MPs and county councillors will do and say anything to stay in power.

Mismanagement of finances didn't seem to phase the chancellors.

Remember Labour's "there's no money left", Gordon Brown selling our gold reserves and the Tories running up a bigger deficit than the last lot.

I love to see headless chicken politicians running in circles as they realise they might have to do something we actually voted for. Watch them wriggle to stay in/on their EU gravy train.

Roll on the next election.

**D G SMITH**  
Oswestry

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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#### EMAIL

[letters@oswestrychronicle.co.uk](mailto:letters@oswestrychronicle.co.uk)

## Lights could be going out

I BELIEVE that the so called 'green energy' drive' resulted not from any desire to save the planet, or stop climate change, but was simply invented to smash the coal unions, a move inspired by Maggie Thatcher.

As a result, we face a huge shortfall in electricity supplies, which will mean the lights going off all over the UK very soon.

The sums don't add up, and there are no miracle sources of power available to us in the foreseeable future.

**W F KERSWELL**  
Picklescott

## Remoaners need to accept result of Brexit referendum

SO we still have some 'Remoaners' that still cannot accept that 17 million voted out of the EU and won, and now trying some sneaky ploy to derail it.

Yes, perhaps Theresa May should not have delayed invoking Article 50, it should have been done on her first day in office.

But these money men in Parliament, that obviously want us in so they can get even richer, have no sympathy for the poor and low-waged, most who want to leave. They were voted in to represent the people—not themselves. Well let's name them, and let's get them voted out of their cushy positions, or what's the point of democracy?

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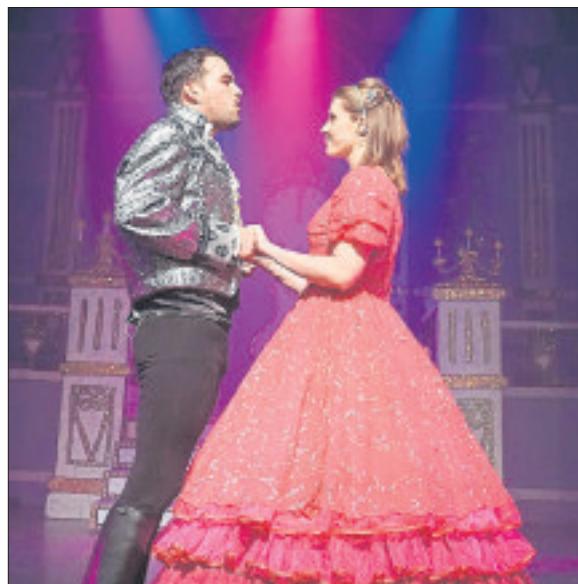
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Dandini is played by Michael Jenkins and Prince Charming is played by The Only Way Is Essex's Ricky Rayment



Ricky Rayment and Charlotte Knowles perform together

# Panto fun for all

**MORE than 3,000 panto-goers have already enjoyed one of the region's best-loved pantomimes, despite the curtain going up a little over a week ago.**

Cinderella at The Stiwt Theatre in Rhosllanerchrugog, just over the Shropshire/Wales border, only opened last week but has already proved a success among those young and old.

The pantomime stars two Shropshire performers. Charlotte Knowles, from Oswestry, is playing the leading role of Cinderella, and Michael Jenkins, from Gobowen, is appearing

as Prince Charming's sidekick Dandini, as well as directing the panto.

Michael said he's thrilled with how the production has been received so far.

He said: "The run has started with a bang, we have performed to over 3,000 school children this week alone, not including the evening and weekend performances to the general public."

"I am absolutely thrilled with the feedback we've been receiving, we've been inundated on social media with great comments and the cast has also received good old fashioned letters of thanks."

"Pantomime is clearly a family orientated style of performance, and this production Cin-

derella quite frankly has something for everybody."

The Only Way Is Essex's Ricky Rayment has also made his panto debut in this production.

Praising his celebrity co-star's performances, Michael said: "Ricky has been great to work with, it's quite remarkable that he's never been on stage before. He's taken to it like a duck to water, everything from his singing to dancing has been brilliant."

"I can honestly say that I think Ricky has a career in the live performance field." Cinderella runs until December 31 at The Stiwt Theatre, with evening and matinee performances. Tickets are available from [www.stiwt.com](http://www.stiwt.com) or from the box office on (01978) 841300.



There is plenty of colour and romance in the Cinderella pantomime at The Stiwt Theatre in Rhosllanerchrugog near Oswestry

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Members of 1165 Oswestry Squadron ATC air cadets enjoyed the festive fun on the Cambrian Heritage Railway



It's all aboard as Santa sets off on a day of present-giving

# Super Santa service!

**ALL aboard! Hundreds of youngsters have been taking rides on a Santa Special train to visit the man in red with their Christmas wish list this year.**

Wrapped gifts were presented to every child by Father Christmas during the special trips, while parents tucked into mulled wine when the steam locomotive pulled in for a stop at Oswestry railway station.

The Santa Special train services have been organised by members of Cambrian Heritage Railway in Oswestry. The services in Oswestry

have been running from the Victorian station in Oswald Road, past Coney Green to the gas-works bridge.

The train operated on Saturday for the final time before Christmas Day.

Tickets cost £8 each and people were advised to book online in advance to be guaranteed a seat. A similar service was also held at the rail group's other base at Llynclys near Oswestry.

The project was among the visitor attraction's key fundraising events for the year.

Jenny Pickstock, Cambrian Heritage Railway's company secretary, said the event has been "brilliant" and had been looking a lot busier than last year.

She added: "We have been running these

Santa specials for many years now. A big thank you to all our passengers."

"We've had wonderful comments and feed-back."

"It's been lovely to hear of how the little children have loved visiting the grotto and the whole experience."

Money raised from the Santa services go towards the group's ambitious plans for the railway. By 2018 the group wants to re-open the line as far as Weston Wharf on the edge of Oswestry to connect visitors to the Stonehouse Brewery and other businesses. Long term, enthusiasts want to open the line to Llanymynech to the south and the main line station at Gobowen to the north.



The Davidson family were among many who had the chance to meet Santa and receive a gift during the Santa Special train services. Photo: Jamie Ricketts.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Fitness centre in fundraising drive

STAFF and members of a new fitness centre have raised £3,455 for a local cancer fund through a charity event.

Ceri Roberts, owner of Unique Fitness in Brook Street, Welshpool, along with staff and members of the centre undertook three hours of back-to-back activities including spinning, Combat MX and Triple Threat during a fundraising morning.

Sponsorship helped raise the cash, with match funding of £1,000 from Barclays Bank, which has now been donated to the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund and was presented to representatives of the charity to help their work.

Ceri said: "We had a great day undertaking a range of activities and we have to thank everyone who sponsored us. We were really pleased with how much money we raised for such a worthwhile charity."

## Shop opens its doors up again

A CONVENIENCE store has reopened after it was forced to close after a customer spotted a rat.

1st Stop on Broad Street, Welshpool, had been issued with a hygiene emergency prohibition notice, ordering the food department of the store to be closed.

The Post Office and newspaper and magazine sales department remained open.

A spokesman for 1st Stop said: "We are pleased to be back to normal and grateful to our regular customers for their understanding and patience during this difficult time."

He added: "We can assure everyone that we have given every assistance to council officers to eliminate the problems."

# New partnership lays down logo challenge

Report by Naomi Penrose

**SECONDARY** school pupils are being challenged to design a logo for a new partnership which aims to develop career guidance for young people.

The best design will earn the successful young person the latest iPad.

The Positive Pathways Powys group brings together Powys County Council, secondary schools in the county, the NPTC Group of Colleges, Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO), Careers Wales and Cambrian Training, who are working together to make it easier for young people to choose what to do after they leave high school.

Cllr Arwel Jones, cabinet member for education, said: "Positive Pathways Powys is all about helping our young people choose the right direction for them after high school. It might be 6th form which is best for them, it might be an apprenticeship or further education or it might be another form of work or volunteering. There are many options available to young people and it can be a bit bewildering."

"To help us with this work are looking to our talented pupils to design us a logo which will represent the work of the partnership."

Entry forms for the competition are available from Powys secondary schools or by emailing Jayne.bevan@powys.gov.uk.

The closing date for the competition will be January 31 and the competition is open to all secondary school pupils in Powys. The winner will be awarded their prize at the partnership's first careers event which is to be held in Llanelwedd in March.

## Historic castle inspires new book



Lucy Sadler's new book has been inspired by Powis Castle

A MOTHER who was taken on tours around Powis Castle has written a book based on its grandeur for parents to read to children at bedtime.

Lucy Sadler, 34, whose parents Les and Heather Davies live in Welshpool, said: "My uncle David, who was a volunteer at the castle for many years, used to take me on tours around the castle and gardens as a little girl and I have lovely memories of those times. I've loved reading books to my daughter, even when she was a few days old and feel it's really important for children. As a mother myself now, with a two-year-old daughter, Willow, I wanted to write and illustrate a story I could read to her and that other families could enjoy too."

Lucy started writing Twilight Cat & The Red Castle a year ago, about a cat, who lives in the woods with a witch in Welshpool. Lucy said she wanted to focus on Welshpool because it was the place where she grew up and she knew it better than anywhere. "I worked at the castle during my gap year in the offices, front-of-house and at the restaurant, so I felt I knew it well enough to write about it in detail," she said.

## Independent wins seat at County Hall

AN independent candidate secured almost half the vote in a by-election to become the newest Powys County Councillor.

Graham Breeze, who already represents the Llanerchydol Ward on Welshpool Town Council, won the vacant Welshpool seat caused by the death of Councillor Ann Holloway.

He polled 323 votes with Liberal Democrat candidate Richard Church taking 212 and Conservative Ruth Canning picking up 126 votes in a 38 per cent turnout.

Councillor Breeze said he was delighted to have won the seat, after being encouraged by the late Councillor Holloway.

"Councillor Holloway encouraged me to stand for Welshpool Town Council and with her health failing persuaded me to stand for her seat on Powys County Council," said Councillor Breeze.

Meanwhile Labour candidate Nicola Morris won the seat on Welshpool Town Council in the by-election caused by the death of Councillor Holloway.

She stood for the vacant seat on the Castle Ward.

## Music event is set to take place

AN evening of vintage music from 1950s through to the 1970s featuring star entertainer and recording star Terry Webster will be held in the Church House in Welshpool on February 18.

Tickets are available at Theatre Haven Box Office on (01686) 614555 or from Welshpool Jewellers. The event will raise money for the Welshpool 1940s Weekend 2017.

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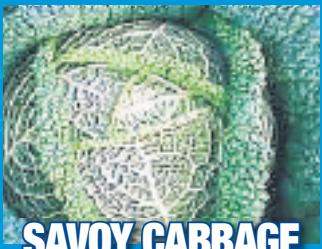
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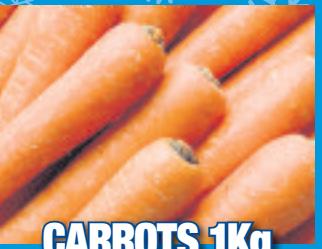
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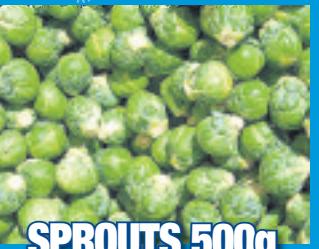
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## Charity shop will support rural groups

THERE'S a new name in Oswestry town centre after a Shropshire-based charity opened its first ever set of shops.

The Rural Charity is a new arm of the Shropshire and West Midlands Agricultural Society, and has opened furniture and household shops in Oswestry, Wem and Shrewsbury.

The shops were formerly operated by Relate and closed when the Shropshire branch of the charity ran into difficulty in October.

But they are now open again under the new banner of The Rural Charity, selling second-hand furniture and other items, with all profits going to help farming and the rural community of Shropshire.

Society director Ian Bebbington said they had seen a lot of customers already.

"We have had a fantastic start," he said. "The shops were already well-established and we have kept the majority of staff and volunteers to help with the continuity. The society has never done anything like this before so it has been a steep learning curve for us, but it's going really well so far. The aim of the shops is to provide extra income so we can do more work to support the rural community in Shropshire – which is exactly what the society was established to do in 1875.

"We want to be able to make donations to people who need retraining or financial support, as well as being able to help the society's supported schemes such as the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and the National Young Farmer's organisation." The society is best known for managing the Greenhouse West Mid Showground and organising the Shropshire County Show – formerly the West Mid Show. The Rural Charity shop in Oswestry is on Albion Hill.

## More refugees given a home

MORE Syrian refugee families have been rehomed in Shropshire.

A further two families have arrived in the county, bringing the total number of families taken in by Shropshire Council to 13.

Council bosses believe the number of refugees who will be settled in the county could rise significantly with the closure of the Jungle camp at Calais.

Mal Price, Shropshire Council's cabinet member for planning, housing, regulatory services and environment, said he was pleased the authority had been able to help more people in need.

He said: "We're really pleased to welcome our newest families to Shropshire. Our working group along with Refugee Action has worked incredibly hard over the past several months to ensure everything is in place to help and support the families to quickly settle into Shropshire life. There has been a great deal of logistical details to sort out prior to the refugees' arrival, and we are only taking those we know we can safely and readily accommodate."

"The support from local people has been overwhelming and I would like to thank all those who continue to support these families, all of whom have had to flee from their homes and families because of this terrible conflict."

## Councillor quits for life abroad

A POWYS County Council cabinet member is stepping down from her role for family reasons.

Powys Councillor Avril York, cabinet member for regeneration and planning, who has been in post since January last year, is leaving Powys to join her husband who has accepted a job in Hong Kong.

Her replacement will be Councillor Tony Thomas.

Leader of Powys County Council Barry Thomas said: "I thank Councillor York for her hard work and commitment over the past 12 months as portfolio holder for regeneration and planning services."

Councillor York said: "I have enjoyed my time on the cabinet despite local government enduring very uncertain times and feel proud of the work carried out by officers on our behalf over the past two years."

"I am particularly pleased that we have reshaped our engagement with the private sector and have seen great improvements in our planning service."

## Hospital working to ensure patients sleep tight



Royal Shrewsbury Hospital staff Patsy Alexa Gabales and Viola Jones discuss the sleep initiative with Julia Greig, a patient from Llynclwyd, near Oswestry



Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital's Jo-Anne Richards and Alison Harper discuss the importance of sleep with patient Peter Vollmer

OSWESTRY Orthopaedic Hospital is involved in a project to ensure patients get a good night's sleep.

The hospital has teamed up with The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust and the Shropshire Community Health NHS

Trust to draw up a 'Quiet Night – Sleep Tight' charter which lists nine pledges.

Sleep is essential for a patient's quick recovery following treatment or surgery. But the results of the 2015 Adult Inpatient Survey showed that 20 per cent of patients nationally

said they are bothered by noise at night which keeps them awake.

by noise disturbance. That is why we were delighted to support the creation of the Quiet Night – Sleep Tight Charter.

"The pledges it contains are all sensible measures which we should be following to help our patients sleep."

## Teamwork is key to couple's job sharing arrangement



Husband and wife team Richard and Sarah Burton chat about sermons



The couple are happy to share out the responsibilities of the work in the church

Report by Laura Cole

WHEN Richard Burton was made redundant from his post within the Church of England it was his wife, Sarah, who found the perfect solution for the family – a unique job share.

The couple are now splitting responsibilities as rector of St John the Baptist Church.

After moving to the area five years ago Sarah became rector of Whittington and West Felton, whilst Richard was employed as senior parish development officer for the Chester Diocese for 10 years.

The decision to share Sarah's role as vicar came when Richard was made redundant.

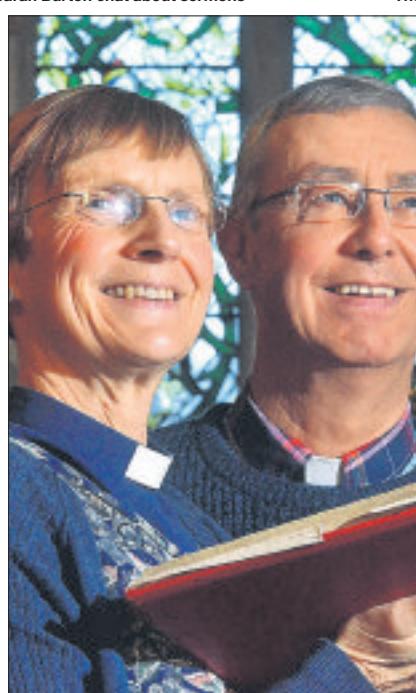
"We had always wanted to do it at some point but we were sort of pushed into it, we are very pleased it happened sooner rather than later," said Richard.

"It was a silver lining, and a life change. Whilst before we were always time poor and money rich, now it's the other way round, but we are lucky enough to be financially secure," said Sarah.

Sarah's role has remained as rector but Richard is now an associate minister. They carry out work that needs to be done across the parishes and share the load. This includes home visits, funerals, school assemblies and general pastoral support.

She said: "We act as a source of comfort to people in their homes, we also attend schools and offer themed collective worship where children are given time to reflect on issues such as peace, friendship and bullying."

They say their shared role can be seen as a reflection of the changing part the church plays in the community.



Working together – Sarah and Richard Burton



Sarah and Richard Burton are sharing responsibilities. Photos: Steve Leath.

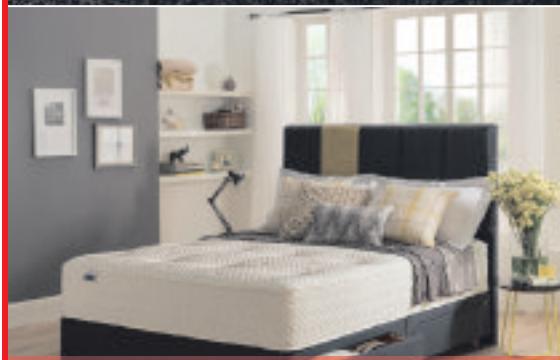
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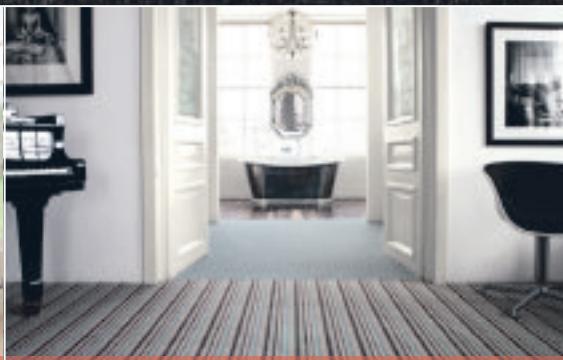
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## School may have to cut back on staff

A VILLAGE primary school may have to reduce its teaching staff to balance its books.

Llanrhedr ym Mochnant is one of the schools that has been told by Powys County Council that it must achieve a balanced budget over the next three years.

But supporters of the popular school say cuts should not be at the expense of educational standards and the school's dual stream structure.

Montgomeryshire Welsh Assembly Member, Russell George, took the school's plight to the Welsh parliament, questioning minister Alun Davies AM, on the importance of retaining bilingual education in Powys.

Mr George said: "In spite of efforts from the headteacher and governors of Llanrhedr ym Mochnant Primary School, it appears that it will have to make reductions in staffing from a five to a four teacher school in order to meet the challenge which has been set by Powys County Council of balancing its budget within three years.

"In doing that, it would lead to the combination of English and Welsh infant streams in the afternoons, compromising, of course, the school's bilingual status as a school."

He said that all small, rural, dual-stream schools face extra costs.

Powys County Council says that there are 40 schools currently in deficit and a projected deficit greater than the council's general reserve. At a recent cabinet meeting it was agreed that the budget plan for Llanrhedr remains unlicensed but that the school is required to continue to work with the local authority to further improve the position.

## Grant joy for dome project

A SCHOOL which is building an eco-dome in its grounds has won an £8,000 grant from a supermarket plastic bag scheme.

The Marches School in Oswestry has been giving the money as part of the Tesco Bags of Help initiative for the dome which will be built next year.

It was awarded from the funds raised by the 5p bag charge after the public voted for the school in the Whitchurch and Ellesmere stores.

The project aims to bring the outside inside and create an exciting classroom space and conservation area on the grounds of The Marches.

Joanne White, business and community development manager, thanked everyone for their support.

She said: "Geodesic domes are inspiring and innovative spaces within which to learn."

"Having such a dome on-site will provide students with an environment in which every individual can become involved in active learning."

"Thank you to everyone who voted and especially to Tesco which has awarded us the grant. We hope that this conservation project will educate and inspire many students across all years to become aware of the importance of conservation and the environment."

## Friends hand over £13,000

THE fundraising efforts of Friends of Llanfair Caereinion Primary School have resulted in £13,000 being donated to the school this year.

The money has been raised following a series of successful fundraising events, led by a dedicated committee supported by the wider community.

The funding has enabled the school to purchase four state-of-the-art interactive boards along with other playground and classroom materials.

Ruth Bates, chair of the Friends of the School said: "Fundraising for the school is an all-year-round job. We thank everyone for supporting these events."

"It just shows that together we can raise a substantial amount of money, which in turn is used to purchase equipment that helps improve the educational experience for all pupils."

She added: "At a time of diminishing public funds, the support of parents and the wider community has never been so important."

## Gemma and her team support woolly good idea



Gemma Manning-Bentley has backed the big knit project for several years

TINY little hats are set to raise hundreds of pounds for Age UK.

Gemma Manning-Bentley and her friends and customers in Oswestry have knitted 3,000 miniature woolly hats for the charity's Big Knit Appeal.

Age UK has once again teamed up with drinks company, Innocent, which put the hats on their smoothie bottles as part of a campaign to keep vulnerable, older people warm in the winter. Gemma, who runs Gemmipop Designs, dropped the hats off at the Shropshire Telford



Heather Osborne and Ruth Brown from Age UK with Gemma Manning-Bentley

and Wrekin Age UK office in Shrewsbury. Supporters and customers of Gemmipop Designs have knitted or crocheted more than 17,000 of the little hats over the last six years to support the Big Knit.

"For every be-hatted bottle sold, 25p will

go straight to Age UK Shropshire," she said. "This will allow the charity to provide Surviving Winter grants to local older people who can't afford to keep warm during the winter."

Gemma organises a knit-a-long session with tea and cake every year.

## Hospital staff are real stars as top standards are met



Members of the Powys Ward team celebrate at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital



Staff on Ludlow Ward have been congratulated for achieving high standards

Report by Sue Austin

**TWO wards at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital have been given the highest ranking following a recent assessment.**

Both Powys, the general surgical ward, and Ludlow, the private patients' ward, had top marks in the STAR - Sustaining Quality Through Assessment and Review process.

Staff in the wards completed rigorous assessments which included testing the quality of patient care, but also management structures and innovation.

Powys ward manager Deb Povall said: "My team are dedicated to ensuring that every single patient that comes through the doors has the best possible care. Quite simply they care from beginning to end."

Ludlow ward manager Helen Cooper said: "The whole focus is around the patient and their needs while staying on the ward. Getting the rating has been hard work but so rewarding. My team are amazing and I'm so proud of them for what they have achieved."

Meanwhile, an Autumn Ball to raise money for the hospital has surpassed its target by over £1,000. Volunteers and patients gathered in Ludlow for a night of festivities in aid of the hospital's pain management team. Employees from Barclays Bank also helped to raise money on the night and contributed £2,000, resulting in a total of £5,200. Both organisers, Caroline and Marie Dahn from Ludlow, came into the hospital to donate the cheque.

Caroline receives treatment from the pain management team led by consultant, Dr Lourdes Gaspar. Medical secretary Deborah Palmer, chief executive Mark Brandreth, and nurse specialist Jan Gilchrist also met the fundraisers.



Deborah Palmer, Mark Brandreth, fundraiser Caroline Dahn, Dr Lourdes Gaspar, Jan Gilchrist and fundraiser Marie Dahn



The Bean Man was played by Matthew Walter



Luke Whitemore performs on stage during the pantomime at the Derwen College



The role of Jack was played by Ophir Yaron



The Derwen College's pantomime this year was Jack and The Beanstalk. Photos: Steve Leath.

## Students show off panto talents

STAFF and students at a specialist college near Oswestry showed off their performing talents when they took part in a pantomime.

The panto was staged by Derwen College at Gobowen which educates and cares for people with learning and physical disabilities.

The creative studies and personal development students performed their pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk.

The show was the culmination of three months of work by the student and the staff.

The pantomime is not the only time in the year when the students show off their performing prowess.

The students also put on a summer show involving all aspects of a theatre performance including props, dance routines and costumes.

And the college students stole the show when they performed at this year's Oswestry Christmas Lights switch-on event.

The students took to the stage at the Bailey Head in the town and gave a memorable performance.

Report by Sue Austin

Staff and students are also celebrating after featuring in the national Ofsted Annual Report as an example of some of the very best educational provision in the UK.

The report, produced by her Majesty's Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw, summarises the quality of education across the country for the academic year 2015-16. The Derwen is featured as an outstanding specialist college.

Meryl Green, director of learning and quality, said the college was included in the report as a best practice example. She said: "The high profile report praises college governors, leaders and managers for setting high expectations for each student. It goes on to say how much students enjoy their time at Derwen and how well they develop their personal and vocational skills. When inspected the college in March this year Ofsted inspectors were particularly impressed by the partnership working we have established with local and national employers to provide students with relevant work experience opportunities and give them the very best chance of securing employment in the future."



Staff members Andrew Harris, Gordon Evans and Jack Harris get in on the act



Audience members clearly enjoyed the show



Jacob Howell was Jack's mum, Corey Edwards was the cow and Ophir Yaron played Jack



Rehearsals were held to ensure everyone knew their words for the panto



There was plenty of fun at the panto



There were a few colourful characters

## Hospice panto fun

Report by Naomi Penrose

PLenty of fun was had as children were given a chance to take to the stage and be the stars in their very own pantomime...oh yes they did!

Young people and staff at Hope House Children's Hospice in Morda, near Oswestry, performed the pantomime Peter Pan to get into the Christmas spirit.

Lynsey Kilvert, fundraiser for Hope House Children's Hospice, said the pantomime was one of the highlights of the year for everyone at the hospice.

She said: "The pantomime really is a wonderful way for everyone here to have a bit of fun but also get us in the mood for Christmas."

"Everyone here gets involved – even our chief executive Andy Goldsmith. He's playing Captain Hook this year."

"It's all good fun and really brings a smile to everyone's faces."

The special one-off performance allows the staff and children at the hospice to dress up and perform in front of an audience.

Every year the hospice invites many of its supporters along to watch the performance and get involved.

The young people at Hope House were also treated to a visit by the stars of the pantomime Cinderella, taking place at The Stiwt Theatre, just outside of Wrexham.

The Only Way Is Essex's Ricky Rayment, who is playing Prince Charming, and Charlotte Knowles, who plays Cinderella, spent the morning chatting and playing with the youngsters.



The cast of this year's Hope House Children's Hospice pantomime line up for a group shot



Panto stars Ricky Rayment and Charlotte Knowles popped in to say hello to the hospice children



Everyone was looking forward to the big production



Staff rehearsed well to ensure they were ready



Staff and children rehearse for the panto at Hope House Children's Hospice

# PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY  
GUIDE TO HOME  
BUYING AND  
LETTING

## Traditional home with improved accommodation

A large village house with new windows, 9 Oaklands Drive, Whittington is positioned on a generous attractive plot with a double driveway and a garage.

It is for sale through JJ Dell & Co at £229,950. With double glazing and gas central heating it has a porch, an entrance hall, cloakroom/WC, two reception rooms, a kitchen, utility, four bedrooms, a bathroom and en-suite and a good sized garden.

The property is situated in a quiet road within the village with excellent local facilities including a post office, a village shop, a hairdressers, an ancient moated castle, church and two pubs. The village is convenient for travelling to Oswestry with a regular local bus service, Shrewsbury, Wrexham and Chester. There is also a main line railway station at Gobowen three miles away.

The property has improved accommodation with new pvc windows and external decoration. It also has gas fired central heating and double glazing. In more detail the entrance hall has a tiled floor and the cloakroom/WC includes a heated towel rail.

With a modern brick fireplace housing a gas coal-effect fire, the sitting room has a fitted carpet and double doors opening to the dining room. The kitchen has modern fitted units comprising ample fitted wall and base cupboards with worktops an extractor canopy, plumbing for a dishwasher, tiled flooring and a view down the garden. The utility room has a sink, wall and base cupboards with worktops, plumbing for a washing machine, space for a dryer, tiled flooring and a door to outside.

Off the first floor, bedroom one has a large wardrobe with mirrored sliding doors and an en-suite shower room and is carpeted. The remaining three bedrooms are carpeted and the bathroom has a modern white suite, contemporary wall and floor tiles and a heated towel rail.

Outside, the property is set back from the road. The driveway has ample car parking space and access to the garage which has an integral door to the utility.

The neat and well maintained rear lawned garden has a good size patio area, a shed, summerhouse and decking.

### KEY FEATURES

- Four bedrooms
- Bathroom & en-suite
- Double driveway & garage
- Village position
- Quiet road

WHITTINGTON £229,950



### TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: JJ Dell & Co  
TEL: 01691 653437  
EMAIL: property@jjdell.co.uk



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DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL



## CREW GREEN

£775,000

## House in a tranquil hill location with around 11 acres

A charming house in a tranquil location set on Bausley Hill with around 11 acres of woodland and paddocks, Bausley Hill Farm at Crew Green has outstanding views across Shropshire.

It is for sale through Balfours at £775,000.

It has a dining hall, sitting room, study, kitchen, garden room, a ground floor bedroom with an en-suite shower room, four further bedrooms, a large bathroom, large shower room, a double garage, handling barn, gardens, mature and established woodland and paddocks.

Bausley Hill Farm is situated at the eastern end of the beautiful Breden Hills, on the Shropshire/Powys border. The property reaches around the hill with an iron fort on the top and woodland extending down to beautiful natural meadowland below.



The surrounding area is well placed for superb off road riding and walking. Bausley Hill Farm is unique with a charming house nestled into the hilltop.

The farm dates back to the 17th century with an immense oak frame and exposed studwork, although the house was completely renovated in 1993 and recently extended to provide a ground floor bedroom with an en-suite bathroom.

The front door opens to a dining hall off which is the sitting room featuring an inglenook fireplace. Off the dining hall is a large study and a farmhouse style fitted kitchen with a Stanley range.

To the rear of the house is a garden room currently used as a dining area looking over the patio and garden. Upstairs there are four bedrooms, three of which have fitted wardrobes, a bathroom and shower room.

Outside, there is double garage with a loft above, garden, handling barn, 3.5 acres of paddocks and 5.5 acres of mature and established woodland.

There is a further 45 acres of wood and woodland grazing available separately.

Close to the village of Crew Green, Bausley Hill Farm is easily accessible to Welshpool, Oswestry and Shrewsbury and is within commuting distance of Telford and West Midland centres.

Contact Balfours on 01743 353511 for more information.

## Superb property includes two separate homes and lawned gardens

## TREFLACH

£425,000

&gt;&gt;&gt;

This superb detached residence in Oak Lane, Treflach is a high spec self build consisting of a spacious three double bedroomed home plus a detached triple garage with a self-contained apartment.

It is for sale through Town & Country at £425,000. The property sits in landscaped grounds with lawned gardens and extensive parking. Situated in a tucked away location in the pretty village of Treflach, all amenities are close by with Oswestry town a five minute drive away. The property offers great scope for two families with adaptable accommodation. The property has been built to a very high standard by the present owners and includes superb insulation, high specification fixtures and fittings along with Cat 5 wiring installed. All rooms are decorated immaculately with carpeting and flooring being in 'as new' condition.

A gravelled driveway leads to the property and is accessed via two farm style timber gates. The driveway provides parking for numerous vehicles leading to the triple garage. The rear garden includes a patio and lawn.

Contact Town & Country on 01691 679631.



## Super Georgian country house has lawns and tennis court

## OSWESTRY

£1,250,000

&lt;&lt;&lt;

A fully restored Georgian country house adjoining parkland and open countryside, Pen-y-Llan Hall on the edge of Oswestry is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £1,250,000.

It has a vestibule, entrance hall, inner hall, drawing room, study, morning room, dining room, conservatory, cloakroom/WC, sitting room, playroom, kitchen, utility room, pantry and cellars.

It also has a master bedroom with dressing room and en-suite bathroom, four further bedrooms all en-suite, bedroom six, dressing room, two attic rooms, a bathroom, detached former annexe with planning permission for a workshop, stores, kitchen, cloakroom/WC, garaging and domestic buildings.

There are also lawned gardens and a tennis court and woodland of around 2.8 acres.

Contact Bowen Son & Watson on 01691 652367.





Detached home on a substantial plot comes with good gardens

OSWESTRY  
£176,500 <<<

A charming detached three-bedroomed property on a substantial plot, 74 Llys Road, Oswestry is well presented throughout and has parking for numerous vehicles.

With generous lawned gardens and a wood burning stove in the lounge, it is for sale through Morris Marshall & Poole at £176,500. With gas central heating and double glazing, its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, a lounge with the wood-burning stove, a dining room, a kitchen, three bedrooms and a bathroom.

The private gardens include a generous lawned area with hedging and fencing for privacy with a paved patio area and shrubbed borders.

The attached single garage has an up and over door, an integral door to the kitchen and an external door to the rear.

Contact Morris Marshall & Poole on 01691 679595.



Property has seven bedrooms and land

DUDLESTON  
£750,000

New Hall at Dudleston between Oswestry and Ellesmere is a substantial Grade II listed seven double-bedroomed family home with stables and 8.5 acres.

It is for sale through Balfours at £750,000. It is a substantial period property dating back to the 15th century. The accommodation is arranged over two floors and offers modern comfort whilst retaining original features such as large sash windows, oak floorboards, an inglenook fireplace, a twisted balustrade oak staircase originating from around 1750 and generously sized rooms with high ceilings.

The property is approached via a drive and is set in a rural area with good access. Nearby facilities at St Martins include a post office, supermarket and a public house.

Contact Balfours on 01743 353511.



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J.J. Dells are Offering  
6 Months Free Management  
to all New Landlords in January

## New system of collections a big success

COUNCIL bosses say they are delighted with the response to new recycling collections across parts of Shropshire.

After several years of not being able to collect cardboard Shropshire Council re-launched its waste collection service, run by Veolia, at the start of October.

Earlier this year changes were also made that allow residents in Shrewsbury to add food waste to their garden waste bins.

In the first month of the new system, an extra 99 tonnes of recycling was collected in Shrewsbury. The scheme has recently been rolled out in South Shropshire and will be introduced in Oswestry and Bridgnorth in the new year.

Paul Beard, waste contracts manager at Shropshire Council, said he was pleased with the public response.

He said: "The response from the public has been excellent."

"It has been something we have talked about for a while and the response is as we expected."

"Shrewsbury and North Shropshire are on the go and there is no reason to believe South Shropshire won't be as successful."

"Anecdotal evidence from our crews is that collection rounds are getting that bit longer because of the take-up."

"What we have had as a result is a 20 per cent increase in all dry recycling collections."

"We think people have been reminded about the recycling message in general. Simplifying it so all metals can go in one box has helped."

Mr Beard said that although he expects the amount of extra recycling collected to drop off, he believes the council will continue to collect more recycling from households due to the simple method.

## Search work cost revealed

MORE than £7 million has been spent in almost two years by West Mercia Police searching for people who have gone missing in Shropshire.

Around 3,000 people have gone missing in that time – more than 1,000 of them children in care.

Many children under the supervision of social services have been reported missing multiple times.

One teenager is reported to have been sought by police on 46 separate occasions within the two years.

The issue places a strain on West Mercia Police resources, diverting officers away from fighting crime.

Figures reveal that, since April of this year, police have recorded and investigated 1,658 reports of missing people in Shropshire. Of these reports, 1,042 are of children under 18 and 585 involved children in care. The total cost to the force in that time is in the region of £4 million.

Between April 2015 and March 2016 police recorded and investigated 1,485 reports of missing children and adults in Shropshire. Of these 847 involved children under 18 years and 512 reports involved children in care. The cost of these investigations ran to £3.58 million.

The cost of a medium term, medium risk police missing person investigation is calculated at an average of £2,415.

## Council ready for the winter

SHROPSHIRE Council says it is "well prepared" to keep the county's roads open throughout the winter, but has warned that budget cuts will put the service under pressure in coming years.

Currently around £2 million is set aside for the authority's "winter maintenance" efforts, although a report from Steve Brown, the council's highways, transport & environment commissioning manager, says some non-essential requests could be affected by cuts in the future. Those services include requests for extra grit boxes, one-off gritting on roads outside the "defined network" and salting for some footpaths and car parks.

According to a report prepared for the council's environment and services scrutiny committee, staff will need to make a more "robust response" to requests outside the authority's statutory responsibility.

Current council policy sees A and B roads gritted, along with certain important local distributor roads.

## Institute in village celebrates special occasion



Pant Women's Institute members celebrating 85 years of the group



Pant WI members Rene Lindop and Joan Jones with the celebratory cake

IT was a special evening for member of Pant Women's Institute at a recent meeting.

First item on the evening's agenda was the annual general meeting.

Sandra Rowlands, president, welcomed everyone and especially Heather Dulson,

vice-chairman of Shropshire Federation. The reports were submitted and adopted.

Mrs Rowlands agreed to remain as president for the forthcoming year, and also there were no changes to the committee.

There then followed a brief ordinary meet-

ing. The speaker for the evening was John Lightfoot.

He who gave a talk on the barn owl, illus-

trated with many slides.

He was thanked by Linda Bristow.

Then there was a birthday celebration.

Members were handed the certificate of 85 years by Mrs Dulson who then cut the birthday cake.

A choice of sparkly drinks and a piece of cake finished off a happy friendly evening for all the members who attended.

## Group has plenty of ideas in mind to help those in need



Jenny Brazier puts together a mosaic at Designs in Mind in Oswestry



Jenny Gilford makes a mosaic at the Designs in Mind studios in Oswestry

### Report by Laura Cole

AN Oswestry organisation which helps people with mental health problems currently has its longest referral list since it opened, bosses have revealed.

Designs in Mind is a social enterprise business with a studio of design makers supporting those in the area with conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar, psychosis, stress and anxiety.

According to its business manager Catherine Wilks, many people in Oswestry and surrounding areas are in a mental health crisis. She said: "It's heartbreaking that we can't take on more people. More demands are being placed on us". The service operates on a referral based practice from either a GP, the mental health team or the crisis home treatment team and is based in studios in Cross Street.

Members work on private or public art commissions. There is also the studio's own brand - Jolt. The brand includes print and patterns designed for the home. Skills learnt include basket weaving, ceramics, felting and printing.

Kathryn Duggins, who also works at the project, said: "People are often surprised at what we produce, our designs exceed expectations. It's a shame people have such low expectations of achievement within mental health but it's nice to receive praise. It's important that individuals do not become overshadowed by their illness and lose themselves in the process. Purpose comes from being valued elsewhere. If you work with purpose you can change people's lives." For more information on the project visit [www.designsinmind.co.uk](http://www.designsinmind.co.uk) or call (01691) 655140.



Some of the artwork carried out at the studios



Artists using the facilities at the Designs in Mind studios in Oswestry

# Review of the Year

A look back through the highs and lows of 2016 in your area



## In a time of change, community stays the same

**WELCOME** to the Oswestry and Border Chronicle's review of 2016.

The last 12 months in the Oswestry and Welshpool area have once again provided a wide variety of news stories for our staff to report.

There have been many highs and quite a

few lows but the year 2016 has never been dull.

The arguments for and against Brexit have been at the forefront of the minds of many in the last 12 months and those arguments have often been reflected in the Chronicle's news and letters pages. And the ongoing Future Fit health shake-up, which will have wide repercussions for patients in

Oswestry and Welshpool, has also been a major concern for many campaigners.

Add to that other national and international events and it is no surprise if 2016 will be seen by many as a year of change and uncertainty.

But one thing that has not changed and probably never will is the incredible community spirit shown by people in Oswestry and

Welshpool. Whether it is supporting those in need, being rightly proud of local people's incredible achievements or backing charity initiatives, the people of Oswestry and Welshpool can be relied on to do their bit to make their community a better place. One of the highlights of the year for many was the incredible support this year's Oswestry Christmas Parade enjoyed. Of course the

parade was just one huge success story the Chronicle was delighted to be able to report. Our reporters and photographers have recorded a huge variety of stories and activities in Oswestry and Welshpool and the villages in between.

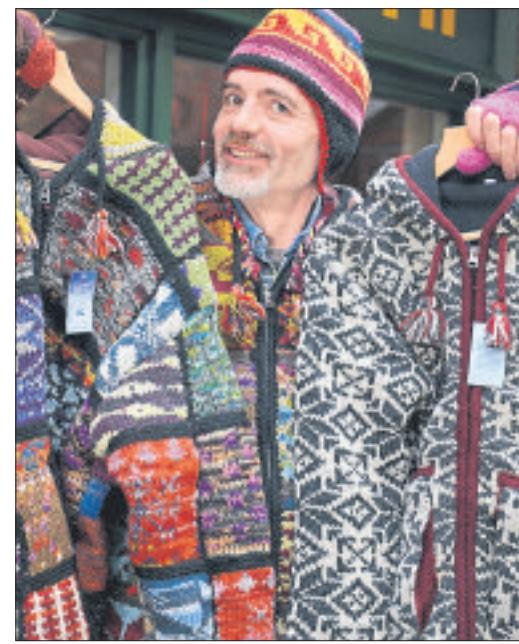
Please enjoy a quick look back at some of the stories we have brought to you over the last 12 months.



Rio Paralympics hopeful Mikey Hall from St Martins with his mum Inge



Twins Jo Baines and Heidi Gannon had reason to contact the Guinness Book of Records



Mike Coppock was looking for a change in the weather

# A very positive start



There was Christmas cheer in Welshpool



Councillor Paul Milner was happy to see more bike racks in Oswestry



Rosie Evans and Jess Taylor with the popular tea towel

**THE year got off to an upbeat start when business bosses predicted a successful year.**

The then chairman of Oswestry Chamber of Commerce Jools Payne gave a positive message for the 12 months ahead for traders.

She said she hoped to see progress on plans to ask whether businesses wanted the town centre to become a Business Improvement District which would attract external funding and improve the economy.

And there was positive news in Welshpool too when a home and outdoors chain announced plans to build a new headquarters and depot after a huge rise in online sales.

Charles Stores was looking to build the headquarters and e-commerce fulfilment centre in Welshpool, safeguarding 67 jobs and providing a base for possible new jobs in the future.

## January & February

Oswestry's landmarks were immortalised in cotton – and proved a popular gift over the Christmas period. Oswestry's attractions were included on a tea towel designed by a local graphic designer and printed in Welshpool.

The tea towel was on sale in Books Bookshop in Church Street and owner Tim Morris said it had proved popular with locals and visitors since going on sale.

The design included well-known claims to fame for the town, such as it being the birthplace of war poet Wilfred Owen, as well as the home of Old Oswestry Hillfort and the Cambrian railway works.

One Oswestry businessman was hoping for a change in the weather in January – hoping it would get colder. The previous year, people couldn't get enough hats, scarves and gloves. But in January, 2016, they were lying on the shelves. It was just an occupational hazard for Mike Coppock, who runs eclectic clothing and

gift shop Rowanthorn in Oswestry. He said he had sold no more than a handful of gloves, but said he hoped the weather would turn and selling trends would change with it.

Mr Coppock said that the weather was "one of the biggest factors" in sales and people's purchasing habits at his shop in Old Chapel Court.

Mike Hall was working hard in January to make sporting history. Mikey from St Martins near Oswestry was already an Invictus Games gold medallist. And he was training hard to book his place in the GB team for the Rio Paralympics.

The 40-year old archer had returned to live in his home county of Shropshire during his training.

There was no need to go without some festive cheer in Welshpool after a young woman decided to try to put a smile on the faces of any one not looking forward to Christmas.

Chantelle Molyneux, 25, organised a lunch at the Bron y Buckley working men's club in

Welshpool. People called into the club for soup and sandwiches and tea and biscuits, but above all for some company.

The Guinness Book of Records was having to change a record in its latest edition after it was challenged by twins from Welshpool.

Sisters Heidi Gannon and Jo Baines were both born on September 23, 1976 but ended up being born in different countries with Heidi being born at 9am at Welshpool Hospital and Jo following at 10.45am after their mother was transferred to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital due to complications.

It came as a shock when Heidi's 11-year-old son William was reading the Guinness Book of Records when he noticed an entry about twins born in 2012 who supposedly held the record for being the first set born in different countries.

Surprised by the entry, the sisters contacted the Guinness Book of Records to inform them of their birth in different countries.

Oswestry was becoming more cycle-friendly

after new bike racks were installed in the town centre.

The racks had been put in after calls for more secure places to leave cycles.

Oswestry's then Deputy Mayor Councillor Paul Milner said: "It's really to encourage people to bike into town rather than use their cars.

"They can then leave them in secure places which are covered by the town's CCTV."

"Also we had some racks before, but they were only in groups of up to three, which was no good if you want to cycle in with your family." The new racks were put in outside the town's market hall on the Bailey Head as well as in the Central Car Park. There were eight sets of racks, providing space for 16 cycles to be secured. Members of Oswestry Town Council were asked to look into providing more cycle racks around the town. The suggestion was met with approval from all members, with several giving examples of times they had met cyclists in the town who had asked for better places to leave their bikes.

# Vow to beat the yobs



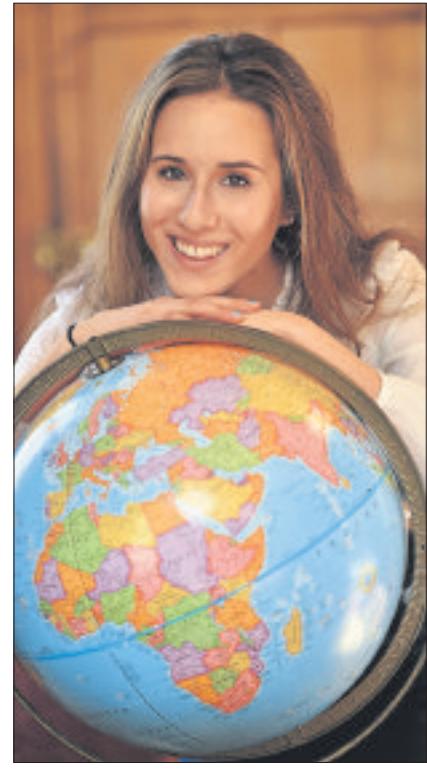
Gareth Sandham with war memorabilia at Powis Castle



Jayne Middleton helped youngsters complete a fundraising walk in Oswestry



Lucy Stark took part in the Oswestry Youth Music Festival



Selina Schoelles was feeling on top of the world



Staff at the New Saints FC at Park Hall near Oswestry were geared up for a fundraiser



Councillor Duncan Kerr asked for an allowances cut

## YOBBISSH behaviour was causing a headache for councillors in Welshpool in March – and they vowed to stamp it out.

Poor behaviour had spiralled in recent weeks with human excrement found at the town's railway station and the discovery of a urine-filled fridge in a doorway in Berriew Street.

A mother also took to social media to reveal her baby's buggy was spat at by a man sat on a bench drinking cider with his friends.

Welshpool Town Council had been calling for an alcohol control order to restrict street drinking but had not received the necessary backing from Dyfed-Powys Police and Powys County Council.

Town Clerk Robert Robinson said: "The problem is it's just five or six people causing the hassle, we need to find out how we deal with that."

## March & April

Welshpool county councillor Phil Pritchard said: "The people of Welshpool feel it's not their own town anymore. Elderly people should be able to walk the streets of Welshpool in total safety, and at the moment they are very reticent."

Councillor John Powell, Powys County Council's cabinet member for community safety, said the authority had received several requests from the town council for the alcohol control order but said it had to be backed by the police.

Temporary Inspector Andrew Griffiths confirmed the police did not back the application for an alcohol control order, insisting the previous year's alcohol related crime figures were the lowest in around 15 years.

Two shops that had stood empty in Oswestry town centre for several years were put up for let. It was hoped that the move would attract new tenants to the large former stores in

Cross Street and see a boost to the local economy. Both units were being marketed by estate agents Halls. Rebecca Welch, from Halls Commercial, said the future looked promising for both shops, revealing there had been good interest in the properties.

Youngsters put their best foot forward to help the worldwide battle to eradicate polio.

Pupils from a number of schools across the Oswestry area walked a lap of the main footpath around the town's Cae Glas Park to raise money for the campaign.

Pupils from Whittington Primary School, Our Lady and St Oswald's School and Bellan House all took part in the sponsored walk organised by the Rotary Club of Oswestry.

Jayne Middleton from the Rotary Club of Oswestry said the children all completed the walk in the winter sunshine.

Student Selina Schoelles had the world in her hand – after achieving the best geography exam mark in Britain. Not just that, but she managed to achieve 98 per cent despite the fire

alarm going off half way through the exam. The teenager, from Neen Solaris, in South Shropshire boasted the highest International GCSE mark throughout the UK.

Selina, 17, a pupil at Moreton Hall School, near Oswestry, said news of her first place came out of the blue. "I couldn't believe it. I was in shock," she said.

The leader of Shropshire Council rejected a call for a 10 per cent cut in councillors' allowances. The call had come from new Oswestry South Councillor Duncan Kerr, who used his first full council meeting to question why the authority's basic council allowance of £11,500 was higher than other councils such as Telford & Wrekin, where it starts at £7,800.

However, in response to the call Councillor Malcolm Pate, leader of the council, said: "You will find that when you have been in the council for a while that it is a very onerous task."

Oswestry Youth Music Festival was hailed as another great success. Four days of competition involved more than 1,000 young singers

and musicians. Three venues staged the competition and there were classes for instruments from piano to drums, brass, woodwind and strings as well as voices. Competition ranged from solos to duets, ensembles, choirs and bands.

Visitors to Powis Castle were invited to step into the trenches and experience life in the Somme as part of its war commemorations.

The cells at the castle had been transformed into a recreation of a Somme trench and officer's dugout as part of its exploration of the story of Percy Robert Herbert, Viscount Clive, the 4th Earl of Powis's eldest son, who fought in the war. Visitors were able to wander through passages made of sandbags, corrugated metal sheets and wooden supports, with period items scattered throughout as if the soldiers were still making use of the trenches.

Fundraisers were out in force for Sport Relief at the home of The New Saints football club. The Oswestry-based club hosted the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile.



Annie Kerr and Dave Andrews were celebrating a new walking challenge



It was celebration time for The New Saints after they sealed a historic victory



Alfie Bradley and Darryl Laycock with the knife angel sculpture

# A time to celebrate



Gillian Sturgess enjoyed cake-making success



Martyn Endean from Francesco Group in Telford and Sam Richards from Toni &amp; Guy in Oswestry try out Joe Hart's gloves



Nursing staff were hoping for award success

**IT was celebration time for histo-  
makers The New Saints after  
they completed a clean sweep of  
domestic trophies for the second  
time.**

The New Saints enjoyed another trophy laden season by lifting the Welsh Cup with victory over Airbus UK in the final at Wrexham's Glyndwr University Stadium.

A crowd of more than 1,400 people saw the Saints land the trophy for a third successive season. Goals in each half from Ryan Brobbel and Scott Quigley sealed the Welsh Cup for the Park Hall-based side.

By lifting the Welsh Cup, the Saints also became the first Welsh Premier side to make it back-to-back trebles.

The New Saints had already sealed the Word Cup and the league earlier in the season.

The jubilant players were delighted to cele-

## May & June

brate their unique double treble in the dressing rooms after the game.

An improvement director was appointed to offer support to Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital as it worked to improve waiting times for patients.

Phil Orwin would spend one day a week at the world renowned hospital with a brief to provide assurance on the improvement work being carried out.

Mr Orwin's appointment follows action taken by NHS Improvement earlier this year when it published the findings of an investigation into the reporting of referral to treatment times and wider issues around waiting times at Shrewsbury Hospital.

That came after NHS regulator Monitor launched an investigation into the trust last summer amid concerns too many patients were waiting longer than the 18-week national target for treatment.

The hospital's spinal injuries team were vying for national recognition after being shortlisted for a prestigious award.

The team was named in the final three for the outstanding team award in the Rebuilding Lives Awards, organised by the Spinal Injuries Association.

Run or walk, a new challenge was launched in which people could combine visiting the countryside with raising money for charity.

The Oswestry Round Challenge was a new 33-mile walk or run event which the organisers plan to make an annual challenge. It follows a route which forms a circuit around the town of Oswestry. The challenge was a charity event for the benefit of Cancer Research UK and the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

It is based on the book The Oswestry Round written by local author Dave Andrews. With photographs by his wife Jane Trudgill, the book was published shortly before Christmas and had already sold more than 500 copies

and raised more than £3,000 for charity. "Jane and I were really keen to repay the wonderful staff at the Lingen Davies Centre where I was treated for prostate cancer in 2014," the author said.

Cakemaker extraordinaire Gillian Sturgess from West Felton near Oswestry enjoyed more success with her magnificent creations.

What started as a hobby 19 years ago when she made her daughter's christening cake has blossomed into a full time career for the mother of two.

Her latest design, a large mantle clock, scooped top prize at the Cake International Show held at NEC in Birmingham, beating off opposition from around the world.

A former knife gang member said he hoped Shropshire's answer to the Angel of the North – the 25-feet tall Knife Angel – will help to combat knife crime across the UK and the world over.

Darryl Laycock, a former member of a notorious Manchester drug gang, lost 30 friends

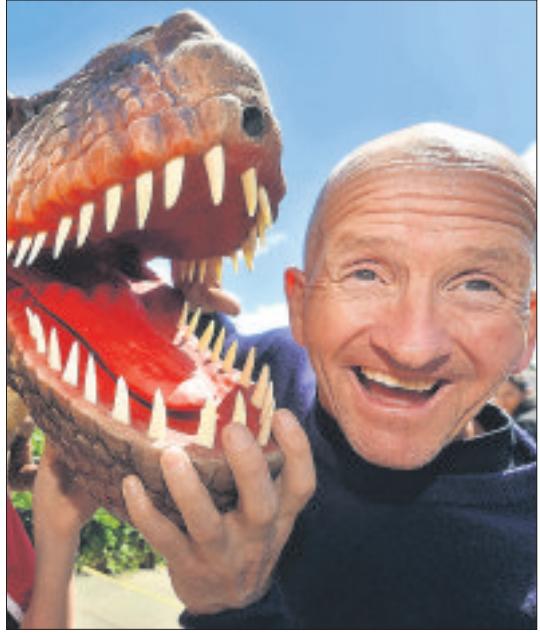
through gang violence, said he was "flabbergasted" by the impact of the giant sculpture weighing five tonnes when it towered over him at The British Ironwork Centre, near Oswestry. The statue was being created by sculptor Alfie Bradley as part of a campaign to remove 100,000 knives off the streets through a national amnesty.

A pair of giant gloves signed by England goalkeeper Joe Hart helped raise £7,000 at a charity ball held in honour of a teenager who died during a fitness training session.

The glitzy affair was held as a tribute to Matthew Dewhurst, Matthew, of St Martins, near Oswestry, was a rugby-mad music scholar at Ellesmere College when he died from young sudden cardiac death at the age of 17 in 2012.

His parents Chris and Sue launched a fund-raising and health awareness campaign, saying a simple preventative health check could have saved Matthew's life. The gloves signed by former Shrewsbury Town stopper Hart went for £460.

# Doubts over services



Eddie the Eagle attended a Marches School educational event



Hope House Children's Hospice's 21st birthday celebrations were a big success



Trials were held for wind farm equipment convoys



Councillor Malcolm Douglass has a go on a coracle



An Ascot Ladies Day event was held at Oswestry Cricket Club to raise funds for the club



Oswestry's mayor had a breakfast surprise

**OSWESTRY** Town Council indicated in July that it would not be taking on the running of the town's close-threatened library and leisure centre.

Shropshire Council said at the time it would no longer run the services and had asked parish and town councils to take on the responsibility.

But the town council said, although the decision was not final, it was likely it would not be taking on the running of the two services after being warned by the government to protect taxpayers from excessive precept increases.

Mayor Paul Milner said the advice came from Marcus Jones MP, parliamentary under-secretary of state for local government. In order to have provided the services, the town council would have had to have increased its council tax by 260 per cent. It would mean the average band D property would have seen its

## July & August

bill increase from £69.92 to £181.16 per year. However the council was looking to take on youth services, open spaces, play areas and heritage sites.

Councillor Milner said: "We understand Oswestry Library, as a statutory service of Shropshire Council, is not under threat and therefore at this time we believe it is best for it to be continued to be run and funded by Shropshire Council. Oswestry Leisure Centre is a long term, complex agreement and is part of a county wide network that we see no mutual benefits by becoming involved."

Councillor Milner confirmed the council had expressed an interest in potential land swaps in order to consider taking on the town's various open spaces.

A drop-in session was arranged to spell out how the transportation of huge wind farm parts over the summer would affect roads in the Oswestry and Welshpool areas.

Developers behind two Mid Wales wind farm projects organised the event at Pant Memorial Hall.

The event included information about the delivery plans and timings of convoys carrying turbine components.

Trials were also staged in July to ensure the convoys could pass through the region.

Hope House Children's Hospice raised nearly £60,000 when it celebrated its 21st birthday in style with a huge party and then a fun day.

A massive marquee to seat hundreds of guests was set up at the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry when a ball was held to celebrate the Morda-based hospice's landmark birthday. And the fun continued the following day when visitors from near and far enjoyed a family fun day at the British Ironwork Centre.

During the Saturday evening black tie event a silent auction, a "loud" auction with TV antiques expert and Halls Auctioneers director Jeremy Lamond and a raffle boosted hospice

funds. Visitors enjoyed a whole array of attractions and activities during the family fun day. Lynsey Kilvert from the hospice said the celebrations resulted in the best fundraising weekend ever.

Coracles were spinning at a brand new event in Welshpool. Welshpool Town Council's Canal and Food event was held on the Montgomery Canal through the town. A group coracle racing event saw local teams and groups compete in a series of coracle challenges on the canal at Welshpool Wharf. Meanwhile, back on dry land there were food stalls set up on Church Street Car Park. Councillor Malcolm Douglass had a go at rowing a coracle to publicise the event.

Business leaders, education bosses and council chiefs enjoyed breakfast together to welcome Oswestry's mayor to his new role. The business breakfast at the Oswestry campus of North Shropshire College also doubled as a celebration to mark Councillor Paul Milner's appointment as town mayor.

The celebration came as something of a surprise to the new mayor, who didn't know the event had been organised in his honour. During the business breakfast the mayor was given a certificate awarding him honorary membership of Oswestry Chamber of Commerce.

A combination of fascinators, finery and fabulous frocks took over a cricket club to mark Royal Ascot ladies day. The fun event was held at Oswestry Cricket Club and was once again well supported by the local community.

The ladies day event had been held at Oswestry Cricket Club for more than five years to help raise funds for the club.

It was 28 years since his efforts at the Winter Olympics transformed Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards into a national hero – and the skier-jumper was still inspiring the next generation.

The iconic British sportsman was one of the speakers at the Marches Academies Trust Festival of Education held in Oswestry.

The festival was attended by thousands of students and teachers from schools across the region.



John Jenkins and Sue Newham were unimpressed with fly tippers



Jeff Brook took part in a motorcycle event at Oswestry's Park Hall Showground



Debi Clutton, Pat Stackhouse and Julie Roberts in the new Baschurch Day Unit at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital

# New healthcare plea



Edinburgh Fringe Festival regulars Dru and Terry Cripps were lined up to present a heritage event in Oswestry



Students at the Marches School celebrated GCSE results



The sun shone on Gullsfield Show

**OSWESTRY'S** mayor made a plea for the town's minor injuries unit to have longer hours and to stay open during weekend afternoons.

Councillor Paul Milner said the unit was an excellent facility but wanted to see it have the same hours as similar units in Shropshire.

His call followed a visit to Oswestry from a Bridgnorth woman who went to the unit in the evening only to find it shut. The unit in Bridgnorth opens from 8am until 9.30pm seven days a week while the one in Ludlow is open from 8am to 8pm seven days a week.

The call for longer hours was part of Councillor Milner's campaign for the best health care for people living in and around Oswestry.

Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust spokesman Andy Rogers said: "The opening hours for each of our minor injuries units are set by a number of factors, such as the demand

## September & October

for services in a particular area and by the level of service that we are commissioned to provide. We recognise that demand for services change and are responsive to that local need and in future we may want to have more equity among those services."

Remain campaigners planning a legal challenge to delay Britain's exit from the European Union were "refusing to accept the will of the people", Montgomeryshire MP Glynn Davies said. Mr Davies said efforts to prevent Theresa May invoking Article 50 and beginning the process of Britain leaving the European Union were "constitutionally very dangerous".

It came after around 1,400 people contributed more than £50,000 to the 'People's Challenge' to prepare a written case for the High Court.

Mr Davies said that the public believe the referendum vote was to stay or leave the European Union, and the result should be

respected. The Montgomeryshire MP added: "Technically a referendum is advisory but all the people who voted thought they were voting for a decision and I think if Theresa May does not invoke Article 50 it would cause outrage, not just throughout Leave voters but quite a few people who voted Remain."

Hundreds of bikers roared into the Oswestry area bringing an economic boost to the town.

More than 600 Honda Goldwing enthusiasts descended on Oswestry Showground at Park Hall for The Goldwing Owners Club of Great Britain Festival 2016. The bikers spent the Bank Holiday Weekend in the area with many taking the opportunity to come into Oswestry, bringing a boost to traders.

The first patients were treated in new £15.1 million facilities at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital. The theatre and ward development at Gobowen-based hospital had been under construction for more than a year. The project marked a major milestone as the Baschurch Day Unit – one of the new departments within

the building – welcomed its first patients. Pat Stackhouse, from Churchstoke, was one of the first to arrive ahead of planned hip surgery.

Joy and relief was evident as students in the Oswestry and Welshpool areas opened their brown envelopes with their GCSE results inside. Schools across Oswestry, North Shropshire and Mid Wales reported excellent results for pupils. Moreton Hall School, near Oswestry, saw straight A\* and As in every subject. There were 233 students who received GCSE results at The Marches School in Oswestry. Students achieved beyond national expectations across eight subjects throughout the curriculum.

Fly tippers left the owners of a cider orchard with an expensive mess to get rid of. An orchard in Wern, near Pool Quay, Welshpool, was targeted by fly tippers with about 50 black and red bags of moss, grit and earth left in the entrance, along with old slates and some pieces of wood. John Jenkins, who runs Old Monty's Cider and started the orchard seven years ago, said: "This mess is absolutely terrible. It's

going to cost us a lot of money to get rid of the waste. There's no need for it. No need for it at all." Sue Newham of Keep Wales Tidy, also visited the orchard and said: "Small businesses in Mid Wales have a hard enough job making ends meet. Having to bear the extra expense and worry of dealing with dumped waste makes life really difficult for them."

Hundreds of people flocked to a bumper village show. Organisers said this year's Gullsfield Show had been the busiest and most

Edinburgh Fringe regulars, Pimp\$ouls, were announced as presenters of the Oswestry Heritage Bake Off. Father and son duo, Terry Cripps and Dru Cripps-Hughes, were looking forward to honing their improvisational skills in the kitchen as presenters of Oswestry's take on the BBC's Great British Bake Off.

Produced by HOOOOH Community Group, the Oswestry Heritage Bake Off was being filmed as part of the town's programme of activities to mark Heritage Open Days.

# Top prize for council



Pharmacy staff were spreading Halloween fun



There were plenty in Oswestry and Welshpool wearing pink for charity



Des James and actress Vanessa Redgrave met at an awards event



Motorcyclist Chris Lee was injured in a crash



Members and staff at Oswestry Town Council were celebrating a top accolade



Rail enthusiasts in Oswestry had reason to smile

**SIMPLY the best – Oswestry town councillors were celebrating after they were named number one by the National Association of Local Councils.**

A voting panel named Oswestry the Star Council of nearly 12,000 in England and Wales for the breadth of activities and events that it was responsible for.

Oswestry Mayor Paul Milner said: "We were delighted with the recognition for Oswestry Town Council, which is testament to the hard work of fellow councillors and staff and our partners and supporters."

Controversial plans which could see the closure of Welshpool's household waste recycling centre "would create a 'fly-tipping disaster area'", campaigners claimed. Welshpool Town Council was objecting to any reductions to the recycling centres anywhere in Powys and had announced a public meeting would be held to

## November & December

air concerns. Welshpool Town Councillor Graham Breeze called for residents to turn out in force at the meeting. He said: "The town council has called the public meeting and invited Powys County Council officers to attend and explain themselves. This is an opportunity to let everyone know just how strongly the community feels about any threat to household waste recycling centres in North Powys. The county will become fly-tipping disaster area if we allow Powys County Council to go ahead with this scheme."

Montgomeryshire Assembly Member Russell George stepped into the row, raising his concerns with Mark Drakeford AM, the Welsh Government Minister responsible for local government.

He said: "I have been inundated by complaints by constituents in relation to the consultation currently being conducted by Powys County Council relating to household waste,

which could potentially result in the closure of a site at either Newtown or Welshpool.

"There are now serious concerns that the potential closure of the site at either Newtown or Welshpool will result in an increase in fly-tipping and a reduction in recycling rates in the area due to the fact that the nearest recycling centre will be an unacceptable distance away."

Customers who might already have felt green around the gills before picking up their medication probably felt even worse after witnessing the spooky goings on at a pharmacy. Staff at Rowlands Pharmacy, in Chirk, near Oswestry, got into the spirit of Halloween by dressing up for the occasion. Predominately transformed into pumpkins, staff decided to don bright orange attire in a bid to raise funds for the NSPCC. The team also organised a raffle as they aimed to carve out some real Halloween cheer for customers.

Fundraisers around Oswestry and Welshpool once again supported Wear it Pink Day to support the Breast Cancer Now charity.

Among the fundraisers was Oswestry woman Irene Eke. More than 20 years ago she was told she only had a 10 per cent chance of surviving her breast cancer. But survive she did and since then she has supported the annual Wear it Pink Day this year's Wear it Pink day was a double reason to celebrate for Irene, also marking 30 years as receptionist at GHP Legal in Willow Street.

A motorcyclist was campaigning for the banning of spotlights on agricultural vehicles on the roads after saying he was blinded by one on a tractor. Chris Lee, from Oswestry, lost control of his bike on the A49 near Dorrington and was taken to hospital with wrist and neck injuries. Mr Lee says he was lucky to be alive. "A tractor came towards me with only not its headlights but its spotlights on," he said. "It was a huge vehicle and I was blinded by the lights. "When I could see again I was on a bend and the bike just went from under me."

Actress Vanessa Redgrave pledged to support the family of Cheryl James in their call

for a public inquiry into a culture of bullying at the Deepcut army barracks. The movie star presented Cheryl's father Des James with a human rights award at a ceremony in London. She then chatted to him backstage to ask how she could help with the next stage of getting justice for four young soldiers found dead at the Surrey barracks. Mr James, from Llanymynech near Oswestry, said he had been overwhelmed. "I had no idea that Miss Redgrave would be presenting our award," he said. "She has asked me to get in touch with her and keep her informed." Mr James and his wife Doreen have been seeking answers since their daughter died on November 27, 1995 – just days after her 18th birthday.

Railway enthusiasts said they were on the right track to reopen Oswestry's rail line as a major tourist attraction. The upbeat message came after a recently restored section of the line was officially opened. Volunteers said the reopening signalled a step forward in their ambitious dream to restore the railway.

## SET THE SCENE

## Gadgets for party time

SET THE SCENE FOR A PARTY TO REMEMBER THIS FESTIVE PERIOD WITH THE HELP OF THESE NIFTY GADGETS...

## ROBOT ROCK

Star Wars C-3PO Bluetooth Speaker, £149, Selfridges (in store only)

Make your party out of this world with the help of this C-3PO speaker. The shiny gold speaker is about the size and shape of a human's head - meaning, if nothing else, pesky wine glasses and plates won't be able to be perched on it - and comes on a black stand. Once you've locked on to a Bluetooth connection via a tablet or smartphone, C-3PO will let you know by a flash of his eyes and a quick blast of the Star Wars opening theme music, before leaving you to hook up to your own playlists or switch to a radio station.



C-3PO speaker

## HAVE SOME BOTTLE

Wine Cooler, £69.99, Currys

Canapes, beers, cakes... throwing a party can often mean forfeiting much-needed fridge space. A wine cooler is an investment requiring room, as well as the initial outlay, but if you host regularly, it could free up your fridge. This one by Currys holds up to eight bottles and is set so the wine is kept at the optimum temperature. If nothing else, buying one is a valid excuse to stock up on some fizz.

## TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

iDance BB10(BK) Disco Lights Bluetooth Party Ball, currently £49.99, down from £59.99, Argos

You'll need to dim the lights to use this compact gadget - and for two good reasons.

Firstly, once it's plugged into the mains, you can set the party ball to cycle through a pretty light sequence, spinning patterns onto your walls and ceilings. And secondly, to hide your blushes if you plan on using the karaoke function too. There are two sockets for microphones - though just one mic is included - and you can stream songs to sing along to via a Bluetooth connection and hum, harmonise or humiliate yourself to your heart's content.

## LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Party Lights, £9.95, prezzybox.com

If you haven't time to deck your halls for a party, this light bulb is a quick fix to set the scene. It'll screw in to standard bayonet fittings so all you need to do is replace your existing bulb with this one. Then switch on the lights, stand back and admire the light display.

## CHOC'S AWAY

Gourmet Gadgetry Chocolate Fountain, currently £29.99, down from £32.99, Lakeland

Who needs a buffet or canapes when you can provide a molten chocolate shower to dunk fruit, biscuits or marshmallows into? This chocolate fountain by Lakeland has three tiers for the chocolate to glide down. Melt your chocolate first - you'll need at least 900g to get the fountain in full flow - and then when the motor is on, add the sweet stuff to the stainless steel tiers and dive in before anyone else has a chance.

## INTO THE LIGHT

ProSound LED Pod Disco Light, currently £29.99, down £49.99, Maplin

Bring the party home with you with the help of some fancy lights. This LED set is easy to assemble and small enough to cart from room to room. Although hexagonal in design, each of the six light pods can connect to each other to create different shapes. Left alone, the pod will perform a multi-coloured light display but it also responds to sound. If that doesn't cut it, you can also manually adjust the speed of the light display.



Bluetooth Party Ball

## APP OF THE WEEK

Spotify, available from iTunes

Whether you pay or put up with the adverts in return for a free service, Spotify makes it very easy to stream music and create playlists. If inspiration for party songs is hard to find, search for other people's playlists, or create a group list and ask your guests to add their favourite tracks to it.

## Christmas Eve



BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV	CH4	CH5
<b>Early View</b> Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show, shown at 7.25pm	<b>BBC 2</b> Rowan Williams features in Carols from King's, shown at 5.45pm	<b>ITV</b> David Walliams hosts the game show, Blankety Blank, on at 6.30pm	<b>CH4</b> Alex Zane presents Rude Tube Christmas Cracker 2016, on at 10.00pm	<b>CH5</b> Eamonn Holmes, Eamonn & Ruth: A Million Pound Christmas, on at 9.00pm
<b>Prime Time</b> 4.30 Shrek the Halls (R) 4.50 Penguins of Madagascar (2014) <b>★★★</b> 6.15 BBC News 6.25 Midlands Today; Weather	<b>4.45 Gorilla Family and Me</b> Part one of two. Gordon Buchanan spends time with Grauer's gorillas. (R) <b>4.45 Gorilla Family and Me</b> Part two of two. Gordon Buchanan revisits the apes. (R) <b>5.45 Carols from King's</b> The traditional annual carol service at the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge.	<b>4.20 One Hundred and One Dalmatians (1961)</b> Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Betty Lou Gerson. <b>★★★★</b> <b>6.00 ITV News Central; Weather.</b>	<b>4.40 Channel 4 News</b> <b>4.45 The Snowman (R)</b> <b>5.15 The Snowman and the Snowdog (R)</b>	<b>3.05 Jason and the Argonauts (1963)</b> Fantasy adventure, starring Todd Armstrong. <b>★★★</b> <b>5.10 Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (1951)</b> Charles Dickens' fantasy, starring Alastair Sim. (b/w) <b>★★★★</b>
<b>Late View</b> 6.30 Pointless Celebrities 7.25 Michael McIntyre's Big Christmas Show Michael puts a festive spin on his weekend variety entertainment show, with live performances by Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Catherine Tate and Harry Enfield.	<b>7.00 EastEnders</b> Phil is given some tough love by both Shirley and Denise, Linda receives devastating family news and Dot closes up for the final time. Donna is touched by a dinner invitation. <b>8.00 David Walliams Celebrates Dame Shirley Bassey</b> The comedy actor hosts this special evening of entertainment in which the veteran singer performs some of her best-loved songs and looks back on her 60 years in showbusiness.	<b>7.00 Dad's Army</b> Mainwaring's men face the might of a rival platoon in a battle to prove their worth. Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier play the superannuated soldiers. (R) <b>8.00 Alan Bennett's Diaries</b> A candid profile of the writer, following him in his home village in Yorkshire, to his community library in Primrose Hill and during a trip to New York.	<b>8.00 Birds of a Feather</b> Sharon, Tracey and Doreen head to Morocco to track down Travis when he goes missing while on his gap year. Comedy, starring Pauline Quirke, Linda Robson and Lesley Joseph.	<b>6.55 Andre Rieu: Christmas in London</b> A festive concert by the Dutch violinist and the Johann Strauss Orchestra, featuring carols as well as songs including Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah and the Concierto de Aranjuez.
10.05 Peter Kay's Christmas Comedy Shuffle A festive collection of clips from the comedian's TV career, featuring highlights from Car Share and Phoenix Nights, as well as a seasonal singalong with Paul McCartney.	<b>9.00 The Vicar of Dibley</b> Alice suggests an unconventional nativity play starring herself and Hugo as Mary and Joseph, and adds an extra touch of authenticity by going into labour mid-performance. (R) <b>11.30 BBC News; Weather.</b> <b>11.45 Midnight Mass: from St Chad's Birmingham</b> The Most Rev Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, leads a Christmas Eve Midnight Mass broadcast live from St Chad's Cathedral.	<b>9.00 The Lady in the Van (2015)</b> Premiere. The true story of Alan Bennett's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman, whom he befriended before allowing her to park her van outside his Camden home. Starring Maggie Smith and Alex Jennings. <b>★★★★</b> <b>10.40 The National Lottery Live</b> The all-important winning numbers are revealed.	<b>9.00 Granchester Christmas Special</b> A bride-to-be reports the disappearance of her groom on their wedding day, drawing Sidney and Geordie into a case with echoes of an unsolved murder from nine years previously.	<b>8.00 The Yorkshire Vet at Christmas</b> The residents of Skeldale ask Julian Norton and Peter Wright to turn on the town's Christmas lights, and find a donkey for the town square nativity scene. Last in the series.
1.00 FILM: Surviving Christmas (2004) <b>★ 2.25 Weather for the Week Ahead</b> 2.30 BBC News	<b>10.50 Christmas TOTP2 Special</b> Mark Radcliffe presents festive performances from the Top of the Pops archive, including classics by Slade, Wham!, Wizzard, East 17, Mud, the Jackson 5 and Johnny Mathis. (R) <b>12.20 FILM: Viva Las Vegas (1964)</b> A racing driver arrives in the gambling capital for a grand prix - but loses focus when he falls in love while working at a casino. Musical, starring Elvis Presley and Ann-Margret. <b>★★★ 1.40 Sign Zone: Countryfile</b> Christmas special from Bamburgh Castle on the Northumberland Coast. (R) <b>2.40 Sign Zone: Holby City</b> A blast from the past upsets Dom's plans for festivities with Isaac. (R) <b>3.40 This Is BBC Two</b> Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two.	<b>10.30 Through the Keyhole</b> Keith Lemon hosts a Christmas special of the game show, as celebrity panelists Shayne Ward, Kelly Brook and Johnny Vegas are asked to identify the homes of the rich and famous.	<b>11.30 ITV News and Weather; Weather.</b> <b>11.45 Christmas Carols on ITV</b> Aled Jones joins the congregation of St Chad's church in Rochdale for their traditional candlelight Christmas Eve carol service.	<b>9.00 Eamonn &amp; Ruth: A Million Pound Christmas 2016</b> Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langford discover the most expensive ways in which people can enjoy the season of goodwill, beginning by sampling a £10,000 advent calendar.
	<b>12.40 All Star Mr &amp; Mrs Christmas Special</b> (R) <b>1.30 FILM: Carry On Loving (1970)</b> Comedy, starring Sid James and Hattie Jacques. <b>★★ 3.05 ITV Nightscreen</b> Text-based information service.	<b>12.05 The Inbetweeners (R)</b> <b>1.35 The Inbetweeners (R)</b> <b>1.00 The Inbetweeners (R)</b> <b>1.30 Friday Night Dinner (R)</b> <b>1.55 Friday Night Dinner (R)</b> <b>2.25 The Last Leg</b> <b>3.20 My Crazy Christmas Lights (R)</b> <b>4.10 Location, Location, Location (R)</b> <b>5.05 The Restoration Man (R)</b> <b>5.55 Prep &amp; Landing (R)</b>	<b>10.00 Greatest Ever Christmas Movies</b> Countdown of the best festive films, from It's a Wonderful Life to Bad Santa. Featuring contributions by Gremlins star Zach Galligan and Miracle on 34th Street's Mara Wilson. (R) <b>12.55 FILM: Scrooge - A Christmas Carol (1951)</b> Charles Dickens' fantasy, starring Alastair Sim. <b>★★★★ 2.25 SuperCasino</b> Live interactive gaming. <b>4.00 The Trafford Centre: Countdown to Christmas</b> The staff has just 10 nights to put up the Christmas decorations. (R) <b>4.50 House Doctor</b> A couple from Milton Keynes hope to move to France. (R) <b>5.20 Angels of Jarm (R)</b> <b>5.25 Roary the Racing Car</b> Mr Carburettor calls in reinforcements. (R) <b>5.35 Milkshake! Bop Box (R)</b> <b>5.40 Peppa Pig (R)</b> <b>5.45 Paw Patrol</b> Animated action adventure.	

# Diaries are write stuff



Keeping a diary can boost your child's writing skills

## IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO GET BETTER AT WRITING, BUYING THEM A DIARY FOR CHRISTMAS COULD BE A BIG HELP, WRITES LISA SALMON

Letting thoughts and feelings flood out onto the pages of a diary can be a valuable emotional release - but for children, expressing emotions isn't the only huge benefit of diary writing.

Pupils who keep a diary are almost twice as likely to write above the expected level for their age as children who don't keep one (27.1% vs 15.5%).

In addition, a report by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) found diary writing allows children to choose what they want to write, and 82% of girls and 76% of boys say if they can choose the subject, writing is more fun.

### CHRISTMAS DIARY

Because of the clear benefits of diary writing, the NLT is calling on parents to think about giving children a diary for Christmas.

"Encouraging children to keep a diary is a great way to get them excited about writing," says NLT director Jonathan Douglas.

"Writing about the best parts of their days, their friends, and their hopes and dreams can be fun for children. Diaries are also a great way to help children build resilience as they process their thoughts and express their feelings.

"We're encouraging anyone buying presents for a child this Christmas to give the gift of a diary. You'll be giving them a platform to express themselves through words and the tools to become a better writer and do well at school."

"The more children write, the better at writing they'll become. And you never know - your child could produce the next Diary Of A Wimpy Kid!"

### VIVID MEMORIES

The diary campaign is supported by children's author and former Children's Laureate Jacqueline Wilson, who kept a diary herself as a teenager and has included diary writing in her books, including diary entries in her children's fiction series Tracy Beaker, and her own diary entries in an autobiographical account, *My Secret Diary*.

"I still have the diaries I wrote as a teenager. I wince at times when I read them, but they bring back those longago days so vividly and help me remember what it's like to be young," she says.

"Diary writing is a brilliant idea for children, because it helps them organise their thoughts and express themselves. They get used to writing every day and become fluent. They often enjoy using a special book and pen and feel grown-up keeping their own private diary."

### DIARY DECLINE

The NLT report found diary writing to be more popular with girls, and more broadly with younger children of both genders - three times as many girls as boys keep a diary (29.5% vs 10.3%), while twice as many pupils in their final years of primary school write in a diary compared to pupils in their last years of secondary school (29.4% of pupils aged 8-11 vs 11.9% of pupils aged 14-16).

While the research also highlighted a drop in the number of children writing in a diary over the past five years, from one child in four (24.5% in 2010) to one child in five (20.3% in 2015), it also found that almost half of children (46.8%) are still writing something in private in their free time.

Douglas says: "Diaries give children a chance to express themselves and provide a unique opportunity to get them excited about writing - something which is important as the number of children writing in diaries has declined in recent years."

"Diaries are also a great way to help children build resilience as they process their thoughts and express their feelings."

Wilson says she always advises would-be writers to keep a daily diary as it gets them into a regular writing habit.

# Christmas Day

## BBC 1



**Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special, shown at 6.45pm**

6.00 Breakfast 9.00 **CBeebies: The Nutcracker** Two children embark on a magical Christmas Eve adventure. 9.45 **Legend of the Boneknapper Dragon** Animated short film based on *How to Train Your Dragon*. (R) 10.00 **Christmas Day Service - Live from Bristol Cathedral** A traditional Holy Communion service. 11.00 **The Christmas Big Sing** 11.40 **BBC News**; **Weather**. 11.50 **FILM: The Croods** (2013) Animated comedy, with the voices of Nicolas Cage and Ryan Reynolds. ★★★ 1.20 **Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas** Shaun causes mayhem at a country fair. (R) 1.50 **Top of the Pops Christmas** The year's most successful chart acts. 2.50 **BBC News**; **Weather**.

## BBC 2



**Duncan Glenning, Victorian Bakers at Christmas, on at 9.30pm**

6.40 **Countryfile** (R) 7.35 **FILM: The Cat in the Hat** (2003) Comedy fantasy, starring Mike Myers. ★★ 8.50 **FILM: Tom Thumb** (1958) Children's musical fantasy, starring Russ Tamblyn. ★★★ 10.20 **FILM: Bee Movie** (2007) Animated comedy, with the voice of Jerry Seinfeld. ★★★ 11.40 **Carols from King's** The traditional annual carol service at the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. (R) 12.55 **Wild Tales From the Village** Animals that live near a remote French village. (R) 1.55 **The Good Life** Margo and Jerry spend Christmas with Tom and Barbara. (R) 2.25 **FILM: The Artist** (2011) Oscar-winning silent drama, starring Jean Dujardin. (b/w) ★★★

## ITV



**Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas, on at 6.45pm**

6.00 **CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids** (R) 6.15 **Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids** (R) 6.20 **Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures** (R) 6.35 **Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures** (R) 6.45 **Super 4** (R) 6.55 **Sooty** (R) 7.10 **Oddbods** (R) 7.15 **Oddbods** (R) 7.20 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 7.30 **Almost Naked Animals** (R) 7.45 **Horrid Henry** (R) 8.00 **Horrid Henry** (R) 8.15 **Horrid Henry** (R) 8.25 **Weekend at Christmas** 9.25 **Countrywise: Guide to Britain** (R) 9.55 **FILM: Despicable Me 2** (2013) Animated comedy sequel, with the voice of Steve Carell. ★★★ 11.55 **FILM: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. (b/w) ★★★

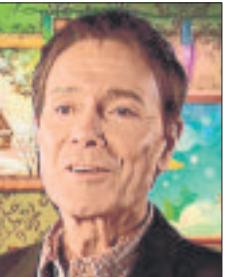
## CH4



**Richard Ayoade presents Travel Man: 48 Hours in Florence, on at 8.00pm**

6.20 **Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice** (R) 6.40 **The Bear** (R) 7.10 **Painting the Bear Hunt** 7.15 **FILM: Animals United** (2010) ★★ 8.55 **The Simpsons** (R) 9.20 **The Simpsons** (R) 9.50 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.20 **The Simpsons** (R) 10.50 **Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas** (R) 11.15 **Painting the Bear Hunt** 11.20 **Father Christmas** (R) 11.50 **The Snowman** (R) 12.20 **FILM: The Sword in the Stone** (1963) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Rickie Sorenson. ★★★ 2.05 **The Alternative Christmas Message** Counterpoint to the Queen's broadcast. 2.15 **Channel 4 News** Including sport and weather. 2.20 **FILM: It's a Wonderful Life** (1946) Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart. (b/w) ★★★

## CH5



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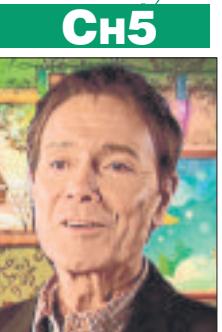
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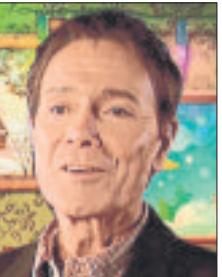
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# New Year gains for Verso and Auris

By Anthony Martyn

Toyota has introduced equipment upgrades for its new 2017 Verso and Auris models, with Verso also moving to new, refocused three-grade line-up.

Toyota has taken the opportunity to streamline the Verso line-up into three grades: Active, Icon and Design. The change has introduced plenty of premium features to the Design models, which top the new range.

The Design's high style quality is taken up another few notches with the addition of new 17-inch black alloy wheels and rear privacy glass, in addition to the standard-fit panoramic roof.

## Top-end

In the cabin, part-leather upholstery is now part of the package, together with the latest top-end Toyota Touch 2 with Go multimedia, connectivity and navigation system. Controlled by a central touchscreen or by voice commands, this provides 3D map graphics, a text-to-speech function for text messages and connected services for better journey planning and local information. The deal includes three years of free map updates.

The specification of Icon models has also been raised with the addition of Smart Entry and push-button start, rain-sensing windscreen wipers, a new seat trim and sunshades for the rear doors.

Toyota Safety Sense remains standard on all Verso, providing extra protection against accidents with a Pre-Collision System with Forward Collision Warning and Autonomous



Toyota Safety Sense remains standard on all Verso models

Emergency Braking, Automatic High Beam and Lane Departure Alert.

Verso models come with an easily adaptable cabin which seats up to seven in three rows of seats; the entry-level Active model is available only as a five-seat vehicle.

The choice of powertrains for Verso Design now includes the 130bhp 1.6-litre Valvematic petrol engine with six-speed manual transmission, in addition to the 1.8-litre



The British-built Auris takes an important step forward

in the driver's colour TFT multi-information display.

Design models are refreshed inside and out with the introduction of new-design 17-inch, 10-spoke alloy wheels and Alcantara cabin trim.

Leather seats can now be specified for Excel grade models as a factory-fit option. To round off the 2017 upgrades, there is a new exterior colour choice: Tokyo Red.

Valvematic and 1.6-litre D-4D diesel units. Across the board, performance figures remain unchanged.

The British-built Toyota Auris takes an important step forward in terms of safety with the addition of Toyota Safety Sense as a standard package on all versions of the car – both hatchback and Touring Sports wagon – bar the entry-level Active grade, where customers can specify it as an option.

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15 (15) RENAULT CAPTUR 1.5 DCI DYNAMIQUE S. Arizona/Black	.....	DUE IN
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14 (14) KIA CEED 2.0 1.6 CRDI Intra Red	£11,850	
14 (65) RENAULT CLIO 1.5 DCI DYNAMIQUE M-NAV Flame Red	£9,975	
13 (13) KIA CEED 2.0 1.6 CRDI Intra Red, low mileage	£9,850	
13 (13) CITROEN C3 Picasso 1.6 VTi+, Silver	£7,250	
13 (63) AUDI A3 2.0 TDI Sport 3dr. Mizano Red, immaculate	.....	DUE IN
13 (63) NISSAN JUKE 1.5 dci AVENTA White, 18,000 miles only	£9,950	
13 (63) VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.7 CDTi exclusive, grey	£12,450	
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12 (62) PEUGEOT 5008 1.6 HDi ACTIVE Silver,	£8,950	
12 (12) SEAT IBIZA 1.2 TDI SE ECOMOTIVE	£7,250	
12 (12) CITROEN C3 1.4 HDi VTR Silver	£6,450	
11 (61) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.7 CDTI ELITE, Waterworld Blue	£7,650	
10 (10) RENAULT MEGANE 1.5 DCI EXPRESSION Silver	£6,850	
10 (10) KIA CEED 1.6 CRDI Pearl Black	£6,850	
10 (10) KIA CEED 3.16 CRDI Phoenix Grey	£6,450	
09 (59) KIA CEED 2.0 CRDI Silver Storm	£3,950	
09 (09) VAUXHALL CORSA 1.7 CDTI DESIGN 5-dr. Silver	£6,750	
08 (58) MINI COOPER 1.6 d (Chilli pack), Black/White roof, high spec	.....	DUE IN
08 (58) VOLKSWAGEN JETTA 2.0 TDI SPORT, Lovely Condition	£7,850	
08 (08) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF 1.9 TDI MATCH, Reflex Silver	£6,750	
08 (06) SKODA OCTAVIA 1.9 TDI CLASSIC silver	£4,650	
07 (07) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF 1.9 TDI SPORT, Shadow Blue	£6,850	
05 (55) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.9 CDTI DESIGN Black	£3,250	
03 (53) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 2.0 DTI DESIGN Red, low mileage	£1,850	

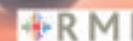
### Petrol Selection

15 (15) NEW VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 DESIGN 5-dr. Red	.....	£8,950
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Third-generation 1.8 litre gets more oomph

## Power boost for the Mazda MX-5

Automotive tuning company BBR has released a new performance package for the third-generation 1.8-litre Mazda MX-5, which boosts power from 136bhp to 175bhp.

Called the BBR Super 175, the bolt-on upgrade also increases torque to 194Nm. It was developed using techniques BBR learnt on its popular Super 200 conversion for the more powerful 2.0-litre MX-5.

Commenting on the Super 175 performance package, BBR managing director Neil McKay said: "Given the relatively high weight of the NC variants of the MX-5, these cars need as much help as they can get to satisfy the needs of the performance enthusiast, but with a priority on retaining everyday drive-ability from a smaller capacity engine."

"I am delighted to say that we have achieved these twin goals by utilising BBR's vast experience with normally aspirated tuning to deliver a wallet-friendly conversion with a minimal insurance loading."

In a similar vein to the Super 200 tuning package, the focus of the Super 175 upgrade is to improve the breathing on 1.8-litre engine. To achieve this, BBR developed a pair of exclusive camshaft profiles with unique lift and timing specifications that help to maximise the spread of power as well as peak brake horsepower.

Working in conjunction with a special tubular stainless steel exhaust manifold and a large-scale engine management system recalibration, the BBR Super 175 tuning package achieves impressive power gains from 3,000rpm, and exceeds standard power and torque outputs at every point in the rev range.

The Super 175 upgrade is fully UK MOT emissions compliant, and runs on both 98 and 95 octane rated petrol. The upgrade is priced at £1,995, which includes a full installation. A DIY version of the Super 175 tuning kit is also available for £1,595.

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2010 10 BMW 318D 2.0 M-SPORT 4 Door Saloon, Blue Metallic, 17" Double Spoke Alloy Wheels, 63,000 miles, £30 Road Tax £9,999



2011 11 LANDROVER FREELANDER XS £15,999



2014 14 MAZDA 3 SPORT 2.2 DIESEL Grey Metallic, 36,300 miles, Sat Nav, £20 Road £12,499



2008 58 VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT CC 1.8 T Manual, Metallic Silver, 51,000 miles, FSH, 1 Owner £6750



13 13 VAUXHALL CASCARDA £11,999



2013 63 BMW 520d M-SPORT AUTO Metallic Silver, Leather, Sat Nav, heated seats, 75,000 miles, FSH £15,999



2003 52 VOLVO XC90 D5 SE AWD Gold Metallic, 82,000 miles, 7 Seats, FSH, £5,999



2011 11 LAND ROVER FREELANDER GS MANUAL Metallic Black, 65,000 miles, FSH, Side Steps, Face Lift Model £12,999



2013 63 LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER EVOQUE PURE TECH 4x4 Manual, Metallic Grey, White Leather, 77,000 miles, Sat Nav £21,999



2013 63 NISSAN JUKE Blue £10,499



2014 14 RENAULT CAPTUR 1.5 DCi M-NAV 5 DOOR, Blue Metallic with Black Roof, 27,000 Miles, FSH, Zero Road Tax £9,999

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# Most extreme school run for Kodiaq

British parents spend almost nine weeks of their lives ferrying kids to and from the school gates, according to new research from Škoda. And for many – over a third (36 per cent) of UK mums and dads – the 'school run' is the most stressful parental duty that they undertake.

However, whilst traffic (64 per cent) is the most common obstacle facing people on their daily commute, spare a thought for those living in the most remote parts of the UK. According to Škoda's study, in the furthest flung places such as the Scottish Highlands and Welsh Valleys, delays to school runs caused by hazards such as flooding rise by as much as 18 per cent against the national average (56 per cent vs 38 per cent).

Livestock on the roads also causes issues. In the county of Sutherland in the far north of Scotland, and in the mid Wales county of Ceredigion, an average of one in ten parents regularly has to stop to bypass rogue sheep and cattle – almost twice as often as any other rural location.

On the back of these figures, Škoda sought out the country's 'most extreme school run' – a nationwide search for the family facing the toughest terrain and obstacles – to put its brand new large SUV, the Kodiaq, through its paces in the UK for the first time.

Step forward the Joneses, a farming family based in Pontrhydfendigaid, Ceredigion, Wales.

Nestled amongst stunning picture-postcard scenery, the Jones' land even features its own waterfall. However, despite beautiful appearances, their location also offers up problematic driving obstacles than cause



The children really enjoyed travelling in the Kodiaq



The off-road route features mud and water crossings



Part of the extreme run the Jones family has to make to get the children to school

the family delays of anywhere between ten minutes and two hours.

Dad William often has to use his chainsaw to help remove fallen trees, whilst ice and floods also present regular challenges – with a broken-down lorry blocking the road for two solid days last year. The Jones' cottage, Cwmmoirio, sits within its own micro-climate, meaning it can be snowing at home when it is raining at the children's school.

Mum Sarah Jones explained: "Every day

when we wake up we don't know what we're going to come up against on our school run, which is part of the fun of living up here really. We could take our horse Willow, but a 4x4 makes things so much easier."

Prior to its secretive arrival in Wales from the Czech Republic, the seven-seater Škoda Kodiaq had completed over a million miles of testing in some of the most extreme climates around the world. In what was a typically wet and windy day in Pontrhydfendigaid,

that testing was the perfect preparation. The Joneses got to experience the Kodiaq's outstanding 4x4 functionality, cutting across the valley via a slippery off-road route that features lots of mud and water crossings.

Sarah Jones concluded: "We were hugely impressed with the Kodiaq and our journey to school was the smoothest we've ever experienced. It tackled flooded areas and hills with ease and we enjoyed the headroom and nice little extras such as the heated seats. The

seven seats would definitely come in handy for collecting our children's school mates and when they're not being used, we can pop our dogs in the back. The kids really want us to buy one now!"

Watch the Jones' extreme school run here: [skoda.uk/ExtremeSchoolRun](http://skoda.uk/ExtremeSchoolRun)

Škoda's first seven-seater SUV will start from just £21,495 and will be available in four trim levels with five engine options, two and four-wheel drive, and manual or DSG gearboxes.

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12 SKODA OCTAVIA TDI SE 2.0L 6 SPEED, BEIGE, ALLOY WHEELS, SAT.NAV., PARKING SENSORS, SERVICE HISTORY, ONE OWNER 47K.....	£8,495	61 TRANSIT T280S FWD, SEMI HIGH TOP, WHITE, SIDE DOOR, AIR CON, PARKING SENSORS, SIDE DOOR, AIR CON, F.S.H. 55K.....	£9,995
62 HYUNDAI i30 TOURER EST. 1.7 CRDI, GREY, SERVICE HISTORY 120 ROAD TAX 35K.....	£7,475	62 VW CADDY MAXI 1.0 2PS C20 TD FACE LIFT, BLUE, AIR CON, TWIN SIDE DOORS, RACKING IN REAR, SERVICE HISTORY 49K.....	£6,495
11 FORD MONDEO EDGE TDCI EST. 1.7 CRDI, GREY, SERVICE HISTORY 120 ROAD TAX 35K.....	£7,495	63 VAUXHALL COMBO 1.2 L1 LONG WHEEL BASE, 1.6 CDTI 105BHP, 6 SPEED, SPORTIVE, SILVER, RACKING/SHELVING IN REAR, AIR CON, SERVICE HISTORY, ONE OWNER 45K.....	£9,995
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13 C3 PICASSO SELECTION HDI, BLUE, SERVICE HISTORY 130 ROAD TAX 24K.....	£6,995	65 PEUGEOT PROFESSIONAL 1.6 HDI 3 SEATER, WHITE, SIDE DOOR, AIR CON, ONE OWNER 54K.....	£5,995
11 POLO SEL Tdi 90 1.6, 5 DR., SILVER, AC, ALLOY WHEELS, ONE OWNER, F.S.H. 130 ROAD TAX 55K.....	£6,995	66 VW CADDY MAXI FACELIFT 1.6 TDI, BLUE, TWIN SIDE DOORS, ELECT. WINDOWS, AIR CON, PARKING SENSORS, RACKING IN REAR, SERVICE HISTORY 64K.....	£6,695
62 VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE 1.6, BLACK, LEATHER SEATS, ALLOY WHEELS, AIR CON, 41K.....	<b>SOLD</b>	67 VW CADDY MAXI 1.6 TDI, BLUE, TWIN SIDE DOORS, ELECT. WINDOWS, AIR CON, PARKING SENSORS, RACKING IN REAR, SERVICE HISTORY 64K.....	£6,695
60 VAUXHALL ASTRA SRi CDTI 160 BHP 5 DOOR, SILVER, ALLOY WHEELS, CRUISE CONTROL 60K.....	£6,250	68 VAUXHALL ASTRA CLUB ECOTEC, WHITE, SERVICE HISTORY 79K.....	£4,295
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61 CITROEN C4 VTR-HDI 91, BLUE, 130 ROAD TAX 49K.....	£5,695	72 TRANSIT CONNECT T200, WHITE, SIDE DOOR, ONE OWNER 41K.....	£5,395
12 NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 1.2, 5 DOOR, MET. RED, FULL SERVICE HISTORY, 130 ROAD TAX 42K.....	£5,295	73 VAUXHALL ASTRA CLUB ECOTEX, WHITE, SERVICE HISTORY 75K.....	£4,295
60 TOYOTA YARIS TR-4D, BLUE, ALLOY WHEELS, AIR CON, SERV. HIST. 120 ROAD TAX 68K.....	<b>SOLD</b>	74 PEUGEOT PARTNER HDI, WHITE, SERVICE HISTORY, ONE OWNER 65K.....	£4,195
61 FORD KA 1.2 ZETEC, START/STOP, METALLIC RED, SERVICE HISTORY 130 ROAD TAX 38K.....	£4,595	75 PEUGEOT 107, WHITE, SERVICE HISTORY, ONE OWNER 48K.....	£3,995
60 PEUGEOT 207 S 1.4, 5 DOOR, BLACK, AIR CON, ELEC. WINDOWS, SERVICE HIST 38K.....	£4,350	76 VAUXHALL ASTRA VAN CLUB ECOTEX 1.7 CDTI, WHITE, 6 SPEED, SERVICE HISTORY 78K.....	£3,995
58 HONDA JAZZ i-VTEC EX, BLUE, FULL SERVICE HISTORY 52K.....	£4,695	77 VAUXHALL CORSA EX CDTI, SILVER, SIDE DOOR, ALLOY WHEELS, FULL SEV. HISTORY 79K.....	£3,495
09 PEUGEOT 207 VERNE 1.4 5 DR, BLUE, CD, AIR CON, ALLOY WHEELS, SERV. HIST. 49K.....	£3,695	78 VAUXHALL CORSA, WHITE, EX GT, FULL SERVICE HISTORY 46K.....	£2,795
57 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 1.5 DCI, SILVER, ALLOY WHEELS, AIR CON, FULL SERV. HIST. 57K.....	£3,495	<b>MOTORBIKES</b>	
59 Clio 1.2 EXTREME 3 DR., BLUE, SERV.HIST, SERVICED, NEW CAM BELT, 2 NEW TYRES 62K.....	£3,085	56 HONDA ST 1300, LUGGAGE, ONE OWNER 14K.....	£5,250
57 CITROEN C4 AUTOMATIC HATCHBACK, BLACK, FULL SERVICE HISTORY 49K.....	£3,000	55 BMW K1200S, BLUE, BMW LUGGAGE, SERVICE HISTORY 41K.....	£3,995
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64 TRANSIT 350 TIPPER CREW CAB, WHITE, BODY HAS JUST BEEN BLASTED AND PAINTED, HEATED FRONT SCREEN, FULL SERVICE HISTORY 26K.....	£13,495	53 VAUXHALL CORSA VAN, WHITE, EX GT, FULL SERVICE HISTORY 46K.....	£2,795
63 MERCEDES SPRINTER 313 CDI MWB, WHITE, CRUISE CONTROL, VERY CLEAN, F.S.H. 57K.....	£11,495	52 VAUXHALL ASTRA VAN CLUB ECOTEX 1.7 CDTI, WHITE, 6 SPEED, SERVICE HISTORY 78K.....	£3,995

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13 FORD FIESTA 1.5 TDCi, Titanium Red.....	£5995	57 FORD FIESTA 1.5 TDCi, Diesel.....	<b>SOLD</b>
59 FORD FIESTA 1.5 TDCi, Diesel.....	£5995	08 CITROEN NEMO HDI 610 Diesel.....	<b>SOLD</b>
57 BMW X3 Si SE, Grey Metallic, Vehicle Must Be Seen.....	£5,895	58 RENAULT KANGO DIESEL, SLR High Mileage, extensive history.....	£2000+VAT

#### CAR OF THE WEEK

03 NISSAN 350z FAIRLADY 3.5 V6 39k, Silver, This car must be viewed. Superb piece of machinery.....	£6950	59 FORD PUNTO, Red, local owner, new MOT.....	£6950
61 VAUXHALL CORSA EXCITE 1.2, Red, lady owner.....	Only £3995	60 FORD MONDEO TITANIUM Diesel, High Mileage.....	£1995
11 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 1.6 Sat Nav.....	£4250	61 CITROEN C3 Diesel, Cheap Road Tax, New MOT.....	£1195
60 VAUXHALL CORSA Ecoflex Silver, 35k.....	£4250	62 VBMW 320i SALOON, Silver.....	£725
13 CITROEN C4 PICASSO VTR+ HDI Diesel.....	£4795	63 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
10 FORD KA EDGE 50k, Grey Metallic.....	£5690	64 BWM 318i SALOON, Lots of History, Previously Supplied by us.....	£995
59 CITROEN C3 AIRREAM + HDI Diesel, Cheap Road Tax.....	£3995	65 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
58 BWM 118 SE Diesel, Grey Metallic.....	£5595	66 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
57 SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT 1.6, Black, low mileage.....	£3795	67 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
55 BWM X5 Diesel, Black.....	£4395	68 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
07 BWM 318i SE Alloys, Must be seen.....	£2995	69 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
58 VAUXHALL VECTRA Exclusive 1.8 Red Metallic.....	£2995	70 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>
05 CITROEN C3 DESIRE 1.4 black, economical car.....	£2995	71 FORD FOCUS 1.6 Petrol, Long Mot, Well worth inspection.....	<b>SOLD</b>

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# How they stand

## Sky Bet League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
S'thorpe Utd...	22	14	5	4	40	20	47
Shefford Utd...	22	13	5	4	40	23	44
Bolton Wdrs...	22	13	4	5	28	13	43
Bradford City...	22	9	10	3	28	19	37
Rocky Rovers...	22	9	9	3	26	23	35
P'bridge Utd...	21	10	5	6	35	23	36
Southend Utd...	22	9	7	6	31	28	34
Fleetwood...	22	9	6	7	34	28	33
Wimbledon...	22	8	6	6	34	25	32
Oxford Utd...	22	8	6	8	28	27	30
Bolton W...	22	8	6	8	33	33	36
Gillingham...	21	8	6	5	26	21	28
Charlton Ath...	21	6	10	5	26	21	28
Millwall...	21	8	4	9	32	25	34
Northampton...	22	7	9	3	33	33	35
Walsall...	22	6	7	5	25	21	27
Port Vale...	22	7	6	9	26	30	31
Mk Dons...	22	6	6	9	26	31	31
Swindon...	22	6	3	10	23	27	32
Chesterfield...	22	6	3	13	27	23	32
Shrewsbury...	22	5	6	11	22	34	21
Bury...	22	6	2	12	34	25	19
Coventry City...	22	4	7	11	19	30	21
Oldham Ath...	21	3	9	12	24	18	18

## Midland Football League

### Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Alvechurch...	24	15	9	1	47	17	49
Lye...	22	14	3	2	57	23	43
Westfields...	19	13	4	2	57	23	43
Coleshill...	21	11	3	7	47	33	36
Spit Khals...	20	10	4	6	47	27	34
Coventry Utd...	22	10	4	8	33	25	34
S'ands...	23	10	4	8	40	23	33
Hornbeam...	21	9	6	6	36	24	33
Cov Spix...	22	8	6	8	43	44	30
Quorn...	21	9	3	9	33	36	30
Walsall Wood...	22	9	2	11	31	37	29
Shepshed Dyn...	19	8	4	7	34	27	28
Upton Unity...	19	6	9	3	37	27	27
Highgate Utd...	20	8	6	9	36	24	27
Rosecr...	21	7	5	9	38	26	27
Lng Eaton Utd...	19	7	4	8	37	37	25
Shawbury Utd...	24	8	1	15	41	61	25
Wulfrunians...	21	7	3	11	23	41	24
Bombay Utd...	20	6	9	3	30	30	24
Port Swifts...	21	5	9	3	30	21	17
Twinkle...	21	2	3	14	28	51	17
Brockton...	20	2	3	15	19	57	19

## Vanarama National

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Lincoln City...	24	16	5	5	51	23	48
Tranmere Rvs...	24	16	5	5	51	23	48
Forest Gr Rvs...	24	14	6	4	43	22	44
Dagenham & R...	24	15	4	7	38	28	44
Barrow...	23	12	4	2	40	20	37
Dover Ath...	24	14	2	8	50	37	44
Chester...	25	10	9	6	40	27	39
Morecambe...	23	10	4	8	32	27	33
Boreham Wd...	19	9	3	9	34	27	33
Aldershot...	25	6	9	8	26	36	36
Gateshead...	22	9	8	9	38	29	35
Eastleigh...	24	9	7	7	37	31	37
Bromley...	25	10	5	10	33	34	35
Sutton...	24	9	5	9	28	33	35
Wrotham...	24	9	5	9	28	33	35
Solihull Moors...	24	7	6	11	32	21	31
Torquay Utd...	24	7	5	12	21	29	21
Maidstone Utd...	25	7	4	14	28	46	18
Studley...	20	3	9	12	20	64	19
Southam Utd...	17	0	3	14	8	71	9

## West Midlands League

### Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Heanough...	23	19	2	7	73	57	58
Wtton Spt Com...	21	10	4	15	51	32	32
Malvern...	23	3	6	7	51	33	22
Wellington...	23	3	7	5	47	30	22
Crediton...	24	10	5	9	35	25	34
Shifnal...	19	6	7	4	42	33	33
Cruckwell Cnty...	21	9	4	8	42	33	35
Pegsby Jnrs...	22	11	0	1	41	42	33
Stoate...	25	8	9	3	43	32	32
Willenhall...	27	10	2	5	32	26	31
Shifnal Rgs...	21	12	2	6	37	24	31
Walsall...	21	12	2	7	40	27	31
Four Crosses...	14	3	3	8	14	23	12
Penybont...	13	0	4	9	14	42	4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Kerry...	10	12	2	2	36	16	21
Borth Utd...	14	10	2	3	37	18	21
St. George's...	14	9	1	4	32	19	21
Uffraif Village...	16	6	3	2	28	21	20
Churchstoke...	12	6	2	4	37	27	20
Crown Coleham...	8	3	0	3	29	25	19
Dudleston Heath...	11	1	8	1	43	31	16
Midlands 2 West North	8	0	0	1	61	122	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Unison...	10	7	0	3	24	22	19
S.A.H.A. Youth...	9	6	1	2	35	25	19
St. George's...	9	6	1	2	35	25	19
Wain...	15	6	3	6	35	21	20
Boars Head...	8	3	1	4	15	17	10
Crown Coleham...	6	3	0	3	12	13	9
Minsterley Hgrs...	8	3	0	5	12	32	9
Dudleston Heath...	10	1	8	1	43	57	10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Bomere H...	9	6	2	4	31	22	12
Harcott Rgs...	16	6	2	4	34	22	12
Four Crosses...	14	3	3	8	14	22	12
Penybont...	10	0	0	1	61	110	30

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Stourbridge Lns...	11	8	1	0	65	122	1
Cambridge...	11	7	0	4	233	250	30
Timworth...	11	7	0	4	28	21	20
Walsall...	11	7	0	4	28	21	20
Walsall Wood...	13	4	1	1	47	57	10
Walsall Wood...	11	1	0	10	147	238	8

### Midlands 3 West North

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Ludlow...	11	7	2	3	24	18	20
Bunbury...	11	6	3	6	35	27	19
Brookwood...	11	6	2	4	28	19	19
Walsall...	11	5	0	2	22	11	12
Walsall...	11	5	0	2	22	11	12
Walsall...	11	5	0	2	22	11	12
Walsall...	11	5	0	2	22	11	12
Walsall...	11	5	0	2	22	11	12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Market Drayton...	7	6	0	1	115	60	30
Greyhound...	5	2	2	2	39	25	25
Tenbury...	7	4	0	3	168	115	21
Joners Arms...	8	2	1	2	26	11	16
St Georges...	11	5	0	6	25	32	15
Market Drayton...	6	3	1	2	24	19	10
Shifnal Nth End...	9	5	1	3	27	23	16
Shifnal Rgs...	9	5	1	3	27	23	16
Ridge...	10	3	2	5	35	25	15
Shifnal Nth End...	9	5	1				

## No festive fun with five-goal drubbing

THERE was little seasonal cheer as FC Oswestry Town crashed 5-0 at home to promotion chasing Charnock Richard.

It meant they lose ground on their play-off rivals in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one.

After suffering a 5-2 loss at impressive Prestwich Heys the week before – their first defeat after five straight victories – Town suffered another five-goal reverse, four of which came in the second half.

Life does not get any easier for Mike Barton's men who head to title chasing county rivals Whitchurch Alport on Boxing Day before hosting Sandbach United on New Year's Eve.

A 20th-minute goal from Mark Adams separated the sides at the break, before the Lancashire visitors took charge through quickfire goals from Carl Grimsshaw (58 minutes), Jonathan Hessian (59) and Spencer Bibby (62).

Towering forward Grimshaw completed the nap hand at Park Hall with his second of the game two minutes from time.

### Learning

"They were very good all over the pitch, the best side we've played and I can see why they are title favourites," said boss Mike Barton.

"We are eighth, but there is a big gulf between us and the top sides, but we will keep building and learning."

Adams shot Charnock Richard into the lead after breaking down the left before firing into the bottom corner.

Despite creating few chances, Town were still in the hunt at the break and threatened early in the second period when Jack Harris made one god run down the right. But Harris Millington was unable to get on the end of his cross.

However, once top scorer Grimshaw headed his first for the visitors, there was no way back for Town.

Their hopes faded further when keeper Richard Cowdery was sent off for handling outside the box, with Harris taking the gloves.

The Oswestry side battled but, without key defenders Alun Morris and Harry Murphy, subsided in the second half with three goals conceded in the space of five minutes.

Keeper Cowdery is set to miss the clash with Sandbach through his one match ban, leaving Barton worrying over who will step in.

## Llan miss out as Gaz proves a bit too hot

MISSED chances proved costly for Llanfair United Reserves who were held 1-1 by visiting Caersws Reserves in the JT Hughes Montgomeryshire League division one.

Llanfair went close through Ashley Davies and Ross Lewis before Davies skinned the outside of the post with a long-range effort.

But they were ahead in the 35th minute when a through ball by Barry Jon Lloyd saw Toby Evans slot past the advancing keeper.

Ashley Davies had an effort cleared off the line. But Caersws levelled on 70 minutes when a deflected shot fell for Gaz Jones.

Llanfair improved their prospects with a 3-1 success at lowly Llanrhedr Reserves, hitting the woodwork no fewer than five times.

TREWERN United went joint top in division two, Jake Mann scoring twice in a 5-1 victory at promotion rivals Carno Reserves. Russell Broadhurst, Sam Rimmer and Kieran Owen also scored.

MEIFOD swept aside Llangedwyn 5-0 in the third round of the Newtown AFC League Cup.

**Montgomeryshire League, Division One:** Bersham Res 1 (PP), Llanfair Res 1 (PP), Caersws Res 1, Llanrhedr Res 1, Llanymynech 3. **Division Two:** Bishop's Castle 3, Abermule Res 0, Camo Res 1, Trevern Utd 5, Llanfachria Maesypandy (PP), Trefonen v Kerry Res (PP), Waterloo Rovers Res 1, Newtown Wds 4.

**Newtown AFC League Cup:** Meifod 5 Llangedwyn 0.

# Super Saints stretch away as Gap widens

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

Gap Connah's Quay 0 The New Saints 3

**ANOTHER** ruthless showing saw The New Saints tighten their stranglehold on the Dafabet Welsh Premier title race after sweeping aside closest rivals Gap Connah's Quay 3-0 at the Deeside Stadium.

The record breaking Saints made it 19 straight wins in the league, and 25 in all competitions, as they continued their march towards a seventh successive crown.

Victory took them 21 points clear at the top. The defending champions strolled to the points with ruthless efficiency, exploiting some slack defending from the home side.

A powerful strike from Scott Quigley after just four minutes separated the sides at the break, before Greg Draper broke through and slotted the second just two minutes into the second period. The points were in the bag once defender Connell Rawlinson fired in from close range inside the hour.

Boss Craig Harrison was naturally delighted. "It's been a tough week, with games on Saturday, Wednesday and Saturday, two of which have been on heavy pitches," he said. "But I thought the lads were fantastic, definitely one of our best performances of the season."

"Once we went 2-0 up, they had to come out, and became stretched. We had five players out with injury, so it shows what a strong squad we've got."

Connah's Quay manager Andy Morrison praised his players' efforts, but felt they paid the price for some slack defending.

### Punished

"All three goals we conceded came from bad decisions, and we were punished," he said.

"But we kept going, had three or four chances, and we can take a lot of heart from what we have achieved this season."

TNS went ahead on just four minutes when Simon Spender's long ball eluded Wes Baynes and Quigley was left in space before smashing a stunning shot into the roof of the net.

Connah's Quay enjoyed their fair share of possession in the first half, with Les Davies heading well wide from a Nathan Woolfe cross while Nicky Rushton's shot drew a routine save from keeper Paul Harrison.

But hopes of a fightback faded just 90 seconds after the interval with another ball over the top. Baynes was again at fault, mistiming his challenge, which allowed Draper to slot his 11th goal of the season into the bottom corner.

Rawlinson fired the third on 58 minutes from close range after the home side had failed to deal with Ryan Brobbel's cross into the goalmouth.

Meanwhile, Newtown continue to flirt with the relegation places after suffering a 1-0 loss against Cardiff Met University at Latham Park. Having climbed out of the bottom two with a 3-1 success at Rhyl the previous week, the Robins had their wings clipped by the students.

Chris Hughes' side succumbed to a second-half strike from Will Evans just past the hour which found the net off the underside of the bar.

The Robins also picked up three more injuries – Luke Boundford (hamstring) was forced off early, with Kieran Mills-Evans and striker Jason Oswell also hurt.

Newtown boss Chris Hughes felt his side deserved something for their efforts. "It had 0-0 written all over it," he said.

## Never mind the quality, feel the win

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

THE New Saints maintained their dominance of the Dafabet Welsh Premier after overcoming 10-man Rhyl 2-1 with a battling display at Belle Vue.

Despite falling behind in the first minute, the runaway leaders hit back with a brace from Alex Darlington, his second from the penalty spot, to stay a commanding 18 points clear at the top of the table.

"Rhyl was not a classic performance, but we again showed great determination and spirit to get a well-fought three points away from home," said boss Craig Harrison.

"We did not play well, and perhaps we should have done better playing against 10 men for an hour, but I'm not going to be too critical when you make it 18 wins out of 18."

"It was a poor game, with not much quality. We're a big bald cap, and it's got to the point that every team wants to be the first to beat us."

The Saints made a disastrous start when falling behind from the kick-off as ex-TNS striker Carl Lamb latched onto a stray back-pass before rounding his keeper Paul Harrison and slotting into the net after just 27 seconds.

Buoyed by the breakthrough, Rhyl's Toby Jones brought a fine save from Harrison with a fierce vol-

ley. But the Saints were back on terms on 12 minutes when Greg Draper beat the offside flag and crossed for Darlington to tuck the ball into the net.

The visitors were fortunate when keeper Harrison made a hash of a Kristian Pierce corner, but somehow regained the ball.

Rhyl hammered 10-0 by the Saints earlier in the season, were making a good fist of things but their hopes took a dive when keeper Owen Evans was sent off in the 33rd minute by referee Nick Pratt for handling outside the box.

TNS, however, struggled to make their one-man advantage count, and their plans were disrupted when Wes Fletcher was forced off early in the second period when stretching for a cross.

But the title favourites got their noses in front on the hour when replacement keeper Rory Crowther brought down substitute Scott Quigley, and Darlington forced home the spot-kick despite the debutant stopper getting a good hand to the ball.

The young Rhyl keeper then did well to keep out Darlington's volley on 67 minutes, and from the rebound Connell Rawlinson blasted over. Rhyl

attacked when they could, Tom Hartley making a great run down the left before Lamb flicked on his superb cross and Pierce blasted just over.

Crowther pulled off an astonishing double save to foil substitute Adrian Cieslewicz and Quigley before the hosts responded with substitute Jordan Miller thwarted by Harrison and Jones lashing over.

More Crowther heroics saw him block at Quigley's feet.

TNS could not kill off their opponents and were relieved not to concede an 86th-minute equaliser when Lamb made a weak connection on Oliver Pierce's low cross, Harrison gathering easily.

Meanwhile, the Welsh Premier League will continue with its 12-team format after a motion to increase the number to 16 next season failed to gain support at meeting of the FAW Council. The league said an "overwhelming majority" of member clubs wish to continue with a maximum of 12.

The league was cut from 18 to 12 in 2010 when founder members Caersws and Connah's Quay were relegated to the Cymru Alliance, along with Cefn Druids, Porthmadog, Rhyl and Welshpool.

But the format is not popular with fans who find as many as six games against the same opponents, depending on cup draws, a stale offering.

## Supporter takes aim with Llan a bit Short

WITH high-flying Churchstoke's clash with Castle Caereinion called off, the rest of the Montgomeryshire & District Airgun League teams were looking to seize their chance to make up ground on the leaders.

But the story of the week came when a much depleted Llanfair team travelled to The Cock to take on Forden in a vital match at the foot of the table.

Forden are struggling to find consistency while Llanfair have problems with a lack of shooters. So much so that the visitors, fielding just four shooters, had to register one of their supporters to shoot on the night.

Their regulars of DT Williams, N Lloyd, D Tooser and G Roberts, with some fine shooting, managed to gain a 16.3 point advantage.

Rob Short, who had never shot target before, posted a 28.2 score. Under league rules the lowest scoring of the five shooters steps up to the mark again to make the sixth. On went Short once more to land another 28 – and help Llanfair take the match 191.7-181.4.

Current third-place side Arddeen entertained Newtown at The Horseshoe, and did not disappoint as they produced a team of the week performance.

Although shooting very well themselves with a score of 195.1, the Newtown side were left wondering what had hit them having witnessed a masterpiece in Bell target shooting by the home side.

### Record

Out of the six scoring shooters, the home side managed four possibles and one maximum through young Jack Francis (35.2), Sarah Davies (35.4), Nick Parr (35.4), Martin Pearce (35.6) and Richard Lewis, with his maximum of 35.7.

Glyn Jones completed the scoring with 33.3, culminating in a total score of 210.6, which is a possible league record.

Second-placed Gullsfield A entertained Crew Green A at the Kings Head in the match of the week. With Crew Green virtually back to their best, this proved to be a fantastic tussle.

After the first four shooters had let fly the teams could not be split with both on 129.6, Gullsfield's Dan Pritchard recording a 35.3 possible.

Shooting at five, Nigel Kelton just got the better of Roger Knight to put Crew Green 1.3 point ahead.

Then came the pairing of the match, Paul Phillips (Gullsfield) against Crew Green's Dave Morgan. Shot for shot they went, Phillips recording a maximum 35.7 but with Morgan also recording a possible of 35.2 and losing by 0.5, Crew Green held on for victory by just 0.8 of a point.

Another tight match took place at the Old School House, where Gullsfield B entertained Crew Green B.

With both teams in mid-table, valuable points were up for grabs between two very closely matched rivals.

The home side took an early lead, but consistent scoring by the visitors' tail end saw them claw themselves back into the match and eventually take it by only 0.9 of a point, 193.1-192.2.

Shooters of the week were Gullsfield's Paul Phillips and Arddeen's Richard Lewis for their maximum scores of 35.7.

## TNS Ladies earn a point

TNS LADIES ended the year in fourth position in the FA Women's Premier League Midlands division one after their 2-2 draw at Long Eaton United Ladies.

Goals by top scorer Emily Ridge and Charlotte Canlett gave the Saints a useful point away from home.

The match ended a creditable first half of the campaign.

However, despite their fourth position, the Saints will keep a wary eye over their shoulders with four sides just one point below them in a congested table.

Defeat was what we deserved – Stephens

LLANFAIR UNITED found themselves dragged back towards the basement pack in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance after going down 3-1 at Gresford Athletic.

Rhys Lloyd gave the Latics a seventh-minute lead, but Daniel Jones levelled eight minutes before half-time when converting a cross from Andrew Hughes to boost Llanfair's hopes.

However, lively substitute Simon Smith restored the home advantage on 75 minutes before Jack Challoner sealed the win with a penalty four minutes later after Matthew Spencer had been sent off on the line.

Defeat left Llanfair lying 11th in the table and looking over their shoulders at several of the sides below them.

"We got what we deserved," admitted boss Rhys Stephens. "They were on top in the first half, we came back into it, and the second half looked like petering out."

"But they brought on a substitute, who made a difference, and they scored two goals in quick succession."

Injury-hit GUILDFIELD failed to close the gap on the leaders as they succumbed 2-1 at Holyhead Hotspur where they were left frustrated by refereeing decisions.

Despite taking the lead through Louis Irvine just before half-time, hopes of returning from Anglesey with some reward were thwarted after the break.

#### Thwarted

Just three minutes into the second period Corey Jones levelled matters before Gavin Shape netted the winner nine minutes from time, with the Gulls now slipping down to seventh.

Meanwhile, CAERSWS' poor home returned to haunt them as they also lost ground on the pace-setters with a 2-1 reverse against Mold Alex at the Recreation Ground.

Looking to cement third spot, the Bluebirds carved out a string of good chances, only to be thwarted by good goalkeeping and wasteful finishing. They did lead on the hour when Iwan Lewis fired home after his first effort had been blocked. Will Thomas spurned a golden opportunity from eight yards, and Mold made the most of their chances.

Alex Weatherby levelled after the hosts switched off from a short corner, and Sam Richardson fired the winner from 25 yards. It was the fifth defeat at home for the Bluebirds this season.

**Fixtures:** Tuesday, Dec 27, Huws Gray Cymru Alliance (2.30pm): Buckley Tn v Prestatyn Tn, Gresford Ath v Mold Alex (2pm), Caernarfon Tn v Porthmadog, Conwy Bor' v Holyhead Hotspur, Guisfield v Caersws, Llanfair Utd v Penrhyncoch (2pm), Holywell Tn v Flint Utd, Ruthin Tn v Denbigh Tn (2pm).

## Wem looking to kick on in the new year

WEM TOWN boss Josh Gough wants his side's 2-0 win at Old Wulfrunians to act as a springboard for an upturn in fortunes in the West Midlands League first division.

Goals from Chris Peel and Jack Gaddes sealed a fourth victory in 20 league games this season for the north Shropshire club, whose next challenge is a trip to Wrens Nest on New Year's Eve.

"Hopefully this will kick us on," said Gough. "It was a good performance and a good result."

"Chris Peel was the oldest player in our side at 25, so it looks good for the future if we can stick together."

Gough added: "It's been tough at times this season but days like this one are really rewarding."

Peel fired Wem in front when he found the bottom corner of the net.

Gaddes doubled the advantage in the second half when he beat a couple of players and tried his luck with a shot which found its way past the home keeper.

CARNO boosted their title prospects after staging a stunning fightback to secure a thrilling 5-4 win at high-flying Rhayader Town at the Weirglo.

Rhayader, who had gone into the encounter as joint leaders, carved out a three-goal lead inside the

# Joy as Oswestry grab their first points

OSWESTRY'S rugby players picked up their first points of the season in the South Lanes andshire One when drawing 15-15 at home to Southport.

After suffering a slender 25-16 loss at Widnes to remain adrift at the foot of the table, their 12th defeat in a row, the Eagles finally halted the slide with a well-earned draw at Granville Park.

It was a revitalised Ospreys who started strongly with plenty of ball from rucks.

Nick Clay, man of the match at scrum-half, kept the backs on the front foot as their surprised visitors were forced to defend stoutly.

The Eagles were ahead when fly-half Ryan Sorrell gave quick ball to Andy Merrett who released the backs. Andrew Aiono offloaded to flying winger Dan

Morgan to go over in the corner for an unconverted try.

With Oswestry holding the upper hand, No.8 Richard Owen pushed his men forward in the mauls.

Another mistake by the opposition led to a penalty which was kicked by Luca Owen Youens for 8-0.

However, following a driving maul, a slick Southport move saw the ball pushed out to the winger for a converted try to reduce the arrears to a point.

Oswestry were undaunted and opened up a 15-7 lead with a converted penalty try.

Winger Morgan chased a sweet kick from Sorrell to the corner and was adjudged to have been held back off the ball.

Oswestry's lead was trimmed to 15-12 at the break

when a lucky bounce from a high kick saw the visitors' winged touch down.

The second half saw both teams go toe to toe with four yellow cards – two apiece – under the new law for high tackles.

Both sides had penalties, but Southport landed one kick to level matters at 15-15.

"At long last a result which we deserved," said coach Dan Samuels.

"It could have gone either way, but we're up and running. Congratulations to Nick Clay on his Lanyard Bowdler man of the match performance."

OSWESTRY II won 39-24 at Northwich III to go ninth in the Freshet North West League Division Four South.

# COBRA strike to ease fears of relegation

## RUGBY UNION

**COBRA** hoisted themselves out of the bottom two in rugby's North Wales League division one with a crucial 31-13 success at home to close rivals Colwyn Bay.

The Meifod men had slipped into basement trouble with a 32-15 reverse at fellow strugglers Ruthin, on top of an 80-7 hammering at high-flying Conwy.

But they got back on track with victory against a side two places above them in the table, and picked up a bonus point in the process after running in four converted tries.

They now take a festive break before resuming hostilities at home to fifth-placed Bala on Saturday, January 7.

COBRA were under no illusions about the importance of the Bay clash.

Despite a bright start, they fell behind to a penalty awarded for a high tackle, but hit back with a good running try from inside their own half as Sion Wyn Williams broke down the right before feeding full-back Richard Jones to touch down under the posts, fly-half Will Worthington converting.

#### Ambulance

The two sides then exchanged penalties, with a youth team Worthington on target, before a second try gave COBRA a 17-6 lead. A crunching tackle from centre Frazer Roberts saw the ball spill loose and Iwan Vaughan picked up before Wyn Williams was put clear to score, again under the posts with Worthington converting.

In making the tackle Roberts was left unconscious and was later taken to hospital by ambulance. Subsequent x-rays showed no fractures.

COBRA were then caught cold as Bay pulled back a try to trail just 17-13 at the interval.

However, the hosts went over for a third try after a spell of pressure close to the visitors' line. Prop Bryn Edwards powered over, with Worthington converting. Hooker Steve Isaac added a fourth try from a driving maul, Worthington adding the extras. COBRA have moved up to third bottom, five points above basement rivals Ruthin who went down 17-5 at Mold.

WELSHPOOL cemented fifth spot in the North Two East with a 23-0 success at lowly Rhos, making it three wins in four outings.

The Maesdyre men have proved a competitive force recently, winning 20-19 at Flint, and 28-26



Dotting down – winger Sion Wyn Williams scores the second try, watched by full-back Richard Jones

against promotion chasing Llanidloes before a 26-19 loss at home to unbeaten Llangollen last week.

With the hosts fielding a strengthened line-up, Pool had to work hard for their 11-0 interval lead. Full-back Tom Williams kicked a brace of penalties before flanker Lee Richards went over for an unconverted score five minutes before the break. Prop Ryan Manuel extended the advantage with a try and scrum-half and captain Joe Stranks also crossed. Williams

chipping in with a conversion. Pool return to action with a juicy clash at home to Wrexham on January 22.

Meanwhile, Welshpool's youngsters went down 22-7 to Bethesda in the North Wales Youth League division two.

Prop Morgan Davies scored a try in the first half, converted by fly-half and captain Dan Earle to reduce the arrears to 10-7. However, Bethesda edged ahead in a scrappy and feisty second period.

# Kelly eyes the winner as Llan push on

## FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

first 18 minutes through Richard Powell's brace either side of an Ashley Jones strike.

But the visitors stormed back with goals from Gregg Brown, Richie Evans, Peter Rees and Colin Reynolds to lead before Mark Davies levelled for the Red Kites.

Carne, however, were not to be denied as Ioan Humphreys pounced for the winner to sentence Rhayader to their second league defeat of the season. Victory cemented Carne's third spot and they are now six points off top with two games in hand.

Rhayader's defeat meant title rivals BERRIEW, who had no game, remain top on goal difference.

At the other end of the table, MONTGOMERY continue to prop up the table after their 3-0 home loss to Llanidloes Town. Josh Matthews fired the Daffs into an interval lead from a fine pass by Rob Bumford, and substitute Joe Evans doubled the lead soon after the break.

With just one win this term, Monty's fate was sealed when Matthews bagged his second with a low 20-yarder.

WELSHPOOL remain deep in trouble, just one place above Montgomery, after slumping 3-0 at home to Hay St Mary's.

Steve Morgan fired Hay into a first-half lead, before Adi Lawford and Brendan Hackett sealed Pool's fate after the break.

Elsewhere, Aberaeron consolidated fourth after seeing off Knighton Town 2-0 with goals from Gareth Severs and Tom Jones, while Llanidloes Wells were 3-1 winners at Machynlleth.

Meanwhile, Brecon Northcote threw the Watson Financial Mid Wales League (South) title race wide open with a 4-3 verdict over leaders Talgarth Town.

Joel Evans won it for Northcote with a contentious late penalty and it was a family affair with brothers Corey (2) and Craig netting earlier.

Llanidloes Town Reserves are second after Rhys Evans bagged a hat-trick in their 6-1 derby success over St Harmon. Francis Bar, Adrian Foulkes and Lee Vaughan were also on target while Ryan Addison replied for the Swifts with a free-kick.

Newcastle beat Rhayader Town Reserves 3-1 at home. Jack Kennett and Craig Morris gave Newcastle a 2-0 lead; Paul Dyke reduced the deficit for the league champions but Matt Jones sealed it.

Latest golf returns from Shropshire golf clubs

#### HENLINE PARK

**Christmas 4BBB:** R Clarke, I Griffiths 45pts; A Hardy, D Williams 43pts; D Hughes & P Muir 42pts (cb).

**666 Comp (Overall):** G Sutton, J Harris, B Morris & R Morris; M Taylor, M Higginson, G Taylor & J Evans; J Athay, I Harris, R Harris & P Muir.

**Medal:** D Phillips, N Barber, T Phillips & C Forsyth; C Jones, D Lawlor, C Andrews & J Anderson; J Williams, R Jones, S Heathcock & P Muir.

**Stableford:** G Owen, C Roberts, B Hones & K Lloyd-Jones; Mr Captain J Fenn, R Smith, T Davies & E Williams; L Hayes, K Bell, B Edwards & A Harris.

**Texas:** J Humphreys, S Ridge, M Welch & J Morris; C Rogers, T Hughes, D Wilshaw & J Rogers; M Brand, C Hughes, A Edwards & J Dimelow.

**Men's nearest the pin:** R Jones  
**Ladies & Mens Nearest the Pin 1 2 A:** E Edwards

**Ladies' Texas nearest the pin in 2:** D Edwards

**Tinsel Comp:** S Sims & C Carpenter 27pts; K Gleeson & Oliver 26pts.

**Seniors' Turn:** **T Division 1:** C Vernal 41pts; M Morris 10pts. **Division 2:** M Cunningham 42pts; C Parker 40pts.

#### LEOMINSTER

**3 Man Stableford:** G Moran, C Maddox (24) & J Cook (19) 39pts; D Rocke (12), A Morris (16) & J Ingram (8) 77 pts (cb); A Roberts (17), W Gore (13) & S Fletcher (12) 77pts.

**December Stableford Division 1:** K Gibbons (4) 27pts; S Fletcher (12) 27pts; P Brothwood (10) 23pts; D Davies (2) 23pts; G Lloyd (17) 32pts; M Morris (22) 32pts; M Higginson (16) 29pts (cb).

**Seniors' Turn:** **T Division 1:** I Robertson (1) 34pts; D Bothwood (14) 32pts; V Fish (13) 29pts. **Division 2:** I Robertson (18) 39pts; M Williams (20) 31pts (cb); K Rivers (17) 31pts (cb). **Division 3:** M Barrington (24) 33pts; T Carver (23) 29pts; T Perry (23) 28pts (cb). **Twos:** J Carver, B Harris, D James, V Fish & J Finner.

**December Stableford Division 1:** I Fraser (11) 31pts; T Richards (13) 30pts; B Harris (14) 26pts. **Division 2:** P Green (16) 33pts; B Leech (18) 30pts; R Garvey (16) 27pts (cb). **Division 3:** D James (22) 30pts; R Harris (21) 29pts; B Holloway (23) 26pts. **Twos:** D James & D Langford (15).

**Christmas Capers:** I Robertson (17) 39pts; A Hooper (12) 37pts; M Clark (20) 35pts. **Twos:** B Gerber (20) & V Fish (13).

#### MARKE DRAYTON

**Ladies' December 9 Hole Competition 1:** V. Hunbach (28) 15pts; A Innocent (34) 14pts; J Lawson (31) 7pts.

**Foursomes:** H Dickson & J Harris 60; J Barker & J Sloan 68.5; S Powell & B Yendole 73.0; A Hardison & H Brady 75.

**Three Person Stableford:** J Barker (20), S Cushing (12), B Roberts (27) 54pts; P Chincock (23), M Playfair (23), B Yendole (21) 51pts; J Sloan (15), A Watkins (17), J Wilson (16) 47pts; F Bowers (32), L Lewis (32), S Powell (23) 47pts.

#### OSWESTRY

**Canadian Greensomes:** Medal: P Huxley & S Roberts 59.4; S Harris & I Pearce 62.4; J Harris & J Poole 63.2; M Jones & J Taylor 63.6; P. D. Jones & Phillip Pardoe 64.0; T Taylor & R Burnett 64.8.

**Ladies' Lady Captain's Drive-In - Mrs Jo Davies Front 9:** S Weaver 19pts on back 6 from M Green 19pts (cb); B Bebbington 17pts (bx).

**Back 9:** M Alford 20pts; J Foster 17pts (cb) on back 3 from G Woolham 17pts (cb).

#### SHREWSBURY

**Ladies' Christmas Shotgun Nine Hole Stableford** **Waltz Front 9:** J Evans, F Stokes, J Cox 36pts; S Band, M Burge, J Hughes 33pts; G Ferguson, S Cooke, S Morris 31pts.

**Back 9:** M Alford 20pts; J Foster 17pts (cb) on back 3 from G Woolham 17pts (cb).

**ELLESMORE RANGERS** strikers Adam Jones and Will Twyford both rattled in hat-tricks as the Beech Grove men hammered Smethwick 7-0.

Christian Oldham also weighed in as Rangers delivered a dominant display to sign off their West Midlands League premier division fixtures for 2016 in style.

Boss Richard Brown, whose side will resume their season at Wrentham Town on January 7, was delighted with Ellesmere's efforts and praised the contribution of his sharp-shooting front two.

Brown said: "I was expecting a tough game but it was a great result, especially considering the players we had missing. I was the only sub we had but the lads out in an absolutely superb performance.

"It was only Adam's second start for us and he took his goals very well."

Rangers are currently fifth in the table, with Brown hoping his side can continue to keep climbing.

He added: "We're fifth in the league with a game in hand on the two teams directly above us."

"If we win that then we will go up to third."

# Sport

OSWESTRY SPORTS DESK 01743 283301

Better times on the way – Samuels



Oswestry's Lanyard Bowdler man of the match Nick Clay

COACH Dan Samuels says Oswestry can look to brighter times ahead after gaining their first points in rugby's South Lanes and Cheshire One.

It has been a tough first half of the season for the Eagles who, following their promotion to a higher level, suffered 12 straight defeats to fall adrift at the foot of the table.

But they halted the slump with a morale-boosting 15-15 draw at home to a seasoned Southport side in a performance that augurs well for the second half of the campaign.

Having brought in a number of new faces in recent weeks, the Eagles have shown they can hold their own after picking up two welcome points.

"We went toe to toe, arm to arm, and it was a great battle," said Samuels. "The players proved how good they are to draw with a side that have won seven games in this highly competitive league. They now have the chance to go on and do great things after Christmas."

"By working harder in training, and becoming a close unit, there is no reason why the team cannot achieve survival and also potentially challenge the mid-table teams for positions – not to mention having a cup run."

The Eagles return to action in the New Year with a trip to Liverpool St Helens on Saturday, January 7.

Across the border, it was also a good weekend for COBRA who boosted their survival hopes in the North Wales League division one with a crucial 31-13 success at home to Colwyn Bay.

COBRA have moved up to third bottom, five points above basement rivals Ruthin who went down 17-5 at Mold.

They look to keep up the good work in their next outing at home to fifth-placed Bala on January 7.

WELSHPOOL also ended on a high by cementing fifth spot in the North Two East with a 23-0 success at lowly Rhos.

Pool return to action with a juicy clash at home to Wrexham on January 7 as they look to continue their improvements in the league.

**Athletics**  
**Trophy time for Olympians – P38**

**Rugby**  
**COBRA strike for vital victory – P39**



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# TNS CHASING NEW RECORD

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

**RECORD** breakers The New Saints have more milestones in their sights as they look to maintain their dominance of the Dafabet Welsh Premier with a festive double against lowly Cefn Druids.

The Saints have soared a staggering 21 points clear at the summit after their comprehensive 3-0 victory at second-placed Gap Connah's Quay – their 19th straight win in the league.

That saw them break the all-time British record for top-flight league wins from the start of a season, beating the previous best of 18 set by Glasgow Rangers back in 1898-99.

The latest success kept the Saints on course to overtake Celtic's 25 straight league wins set in 2003 and 2004, although this record did not apply from the very start of that season as The Hoops drew their first SPL game 0-0 at Dunfermline.

Worryingly for their rivals, TNS boss Craig Harrison promises no let-up as the defending champions look to wrap up a seventh successive league crown in record time.

They now have two encounters against the struggling Druids, the first on Boxing Day at Park Hall (2.30pm) before making the return trip to the Rock the following Friday (December 30, 7.45pm).

## Basement

Having already reeled off 25 straight wins in all competitions, the Saints are now in sight of Dutch club Ajax's record of 26 between October 3, 1971 and March 29, 1972.

With the Ancients languishing in the basement places, the Saints are firm favourites to reach the new landmark – but Harrison will be taking nothing for granted.

"We want to win every game, that is the challenge. We certainly will never be sick of winning," he said. "Whether we are 21 points clear, 10, nine or just one, the hunger and desire is still there."

"Every game is a challenge, whoever you are playing, and the Ancients will be another tough one for us as they are fighting for their lives. They need to pick up every point they can as they want to survive in the league."

"This will present a different challenge than when you are playing teams near the top like Connah's Quay."

"But we have an excellent group of players. We had five or six out against Gap, we've been shuffling players about, we had (defender) Phil Baker playing in midfield, but it goes to show just what a strong squad we've got."

Wes Fletcher, Chris Sargeant, Jon Routledge and Jamie Mullan are fitness worries, while Robbie Parry is a certain non-starter following a recent operation.

The Druids actually played their early games at Park Hall while a 3G pitch was being installed at their Rock base.

TNS will cut the entry cost for the Boxing Day game to £5, with pensioners and children free.

## Davies doubles up on day one



Jo Davies flanked by retiring ladies captain Margaret Green, left, and 2017 vice-captain Marie Male

NEW Oswestry Golf Club ladies captain Jo Davies had a busy day of it when driving into office.

After she had smacked her shot down the fairway, the club staged a mixed competition – and Davies presented the prizes with new men's captain Neil Brogden.

The competition was similar to foursomes, with the men driving off the first tee and then alternating with the ladies.

There was a combined handicap allowance of 5/12 with the competition played over 15 holes, omitting the 11th, 12th and 13th in order to

finish in daylight. There were 46 pairs taking part, and 36 prizes.

The winners were Alex Richardson and Sarah Weaver, who received the Doug Humphreys Cup from his wife, Babs.

The day was organised by Ann and Campbell Colquhoun and members also enjoyed a Christmas roast afterwards.

Results: 1 Alex Richardson & Sarah Weaver (54 6/12), 2 Stephen Jones & Kath Jones (55 2/12), 3 Steve Ashworth (vice-captain) & Marie Male (lady vice-captain) (55 3/12), 4 Simon & Vicki Pound (56 5/12).



Fore! Ladies captain for 2017, Jo Davies, drives into office at Oswestry Golf Club

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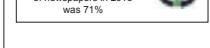
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Llanrhedadr on their way to the Valley

IN-FORM Llanrhedadr have been drawn away to Radnor Valley in the quarter-finals of the Spar Mid Wales League Cup.

Llan are going well at the moment, having beaten leaders Rhayader Town and Bow Street in recent weeks to move up to seventh and have games in hand on the teams above.

High-flying Berriew, 15 games unbeaten, host Bow Street in another of the last eight ties, a side they defeated 3-0 in the league recently.

Elsewhere, Carno head to Dolgellau in their quarter-final and Rhayader Town welcome local rivals Llandrindod Wells.

Draw: Radnor Valley v Llanrhedadr, Dolgellau v Carno, Berriew v Bow Street, Rhayader v Llandrindod Wells. Ties to be played in March 2017.

Meanwhile, Berriew hot shot Richard Davies is the runaway leader in the Spar Mid Wales League division one goal charts with 22, 19 in the league and three in the cup.

Team-mate Karl Seliarts is his nearest challenger with 14 league goals, along with Carno's Peter Rees (12 league, two cup).

Llanrhedadr marksman Iwan Matthews, last season's leading goal getter, is having another fruitful season with 13 goals (10 and three).

Meanwhile, Llanantffraid Village striker Nathan Proder heads the second division charts with 16 (14 and two).

Churchstoke's Max McLaughlin has 12 goals (seven and five) while David Aylward (Abermule) and Kerry's Luke Mumford have both netted nine.

League action resumes on Boxing Day with Berriew looking to maintain pole position at home to Montgomery. Llanrhedadr face a crunch trip to third-placed Carno and joint leaders Rhayader Town visit in-form Llandrindod Wells.

In the second division, Llanantffraid Village are away to Four Crosses and Dydffryn Banw welcome Churchstoke.

**Barton bags forward – but misses Jones**

FORWARD Richard Williams-Cooke has joined F.C. Oswestry Town – but boss Mike Barton has missed out in his bid to sign up Llandrindod Town's Steve Jones.

Williams-Cooke, 36, arrives with plenty of experience, with his previous clubs including Denbigh Town, Ruthin Town, Chirk AAA and Newtown.

He was also manager at Denbigh Town.

Oswestry return to action in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one with a tough trip to county rivals Whitchurch Alport on Boxing Day before hosting Sandbach United on New Year's Eve.

The Oswestry side will want to bounce back from last Saturday's 5-0 home beating by promotion chasing Charnock Richard as they bid to consolidate their top eight position.

They will still be without influential defender Alun Morris, while keeper Richard Cowdry is set to miss the New Year's Day clash with Sandbach through suspension after being sent off for handling outside the box against Charnock Richard.

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